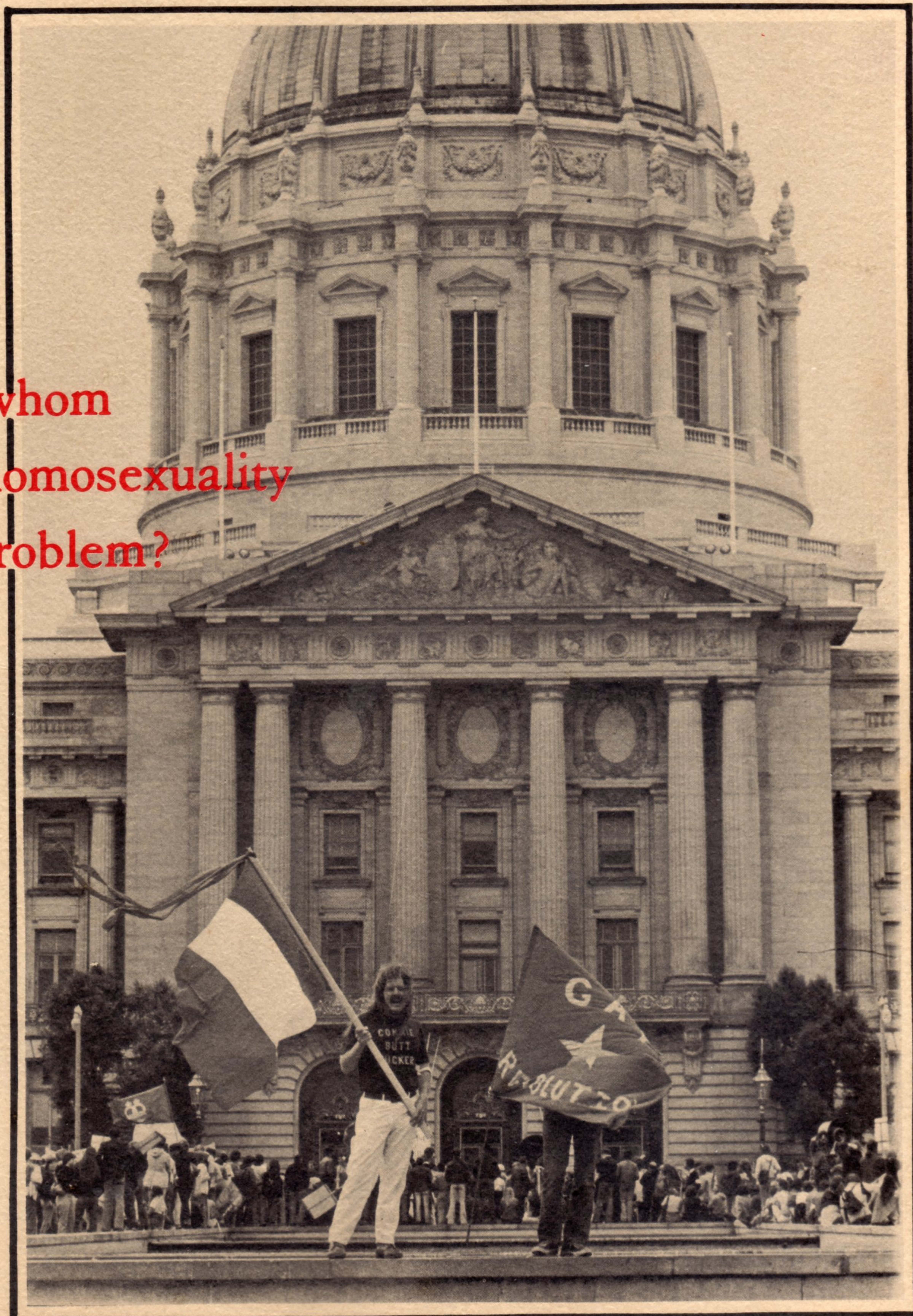


a journal of
collective
faggotry

magnus

To whom
is homosexuality
a problem?



number 1
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Michael Krauss

Michael Krauss was a loved and respected comrade. He was killed in a bicycle accident of June 29 this year, the day after his twenty-eighth birthday. Michael began to question and confront the institutionalized injustice in the American system when he was in high school in Newark, N.J., and he learned about the racial segregation of the school cafeteria. As a result he and several friends started a tutoring program for Black grammar school children.

At the University of Chicago he worked in the struggle against the American war in Viet Nam. Eventually the University expelled him for participating in a sit-in which challenged the University's policy of expansion into the Black ghetto and the firing of a feminist professor.

After moving to San Francisco he helped found Join Hands, a support group for gay prisoners. After deciding he wanted to earn his living doing meaningful work, he became a vocational nurse, because he

wanted to work towards a society in which cooperatives of health care workers could provide quality care based on human needs, rather than the elitist and stratified health care system we have now. He helped organize a conference for gay health care workers early this year and was involved in the ongoing work of organizing all people involved in health care when he died.

Besides health care Michael had a deep commitment to ending United States' imperialist involvement in the affairs of other countries. He worked in the July 4th Coalition and was a member of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee.

Michael strived to be a communist. He strived to identify the source of the injustice which he felt and saw all around him—against gay people, against Third World people, women, and workers—and he dedicated himself to developing the most effective response to end that injustice. This response for him meant working to build a revolutionary communist movement. Michael was a kind, thoughtful, and compassionate man with a gentle sense of humor. It is still hard for us to realize he is gone. Over three hundred of his co-workers, friends, and comrades gathered at his memorial service to share our sorrow, our memories of him, and the joy of his life and work. It gave us the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the struggle to which Michael committed his life and to reaffirm our knowledge that the people united will never be defeated. We loved you Michael, and we shall miss you very much.

A memorial fund has been set up to send medical assistance to Viet Nam in Michael's name, dedicated to building solidarity with the Vietnamese people and to helping to reconstruct Viet Nam. Contributions can be made out to the Michael Krauss Memorial Fund and sent c/o Health/PAC, 558 Capp Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

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To our readers

We are publishing *Magnus* in order to provide a place where faggots can share their culture through poetry, art, and fiction, and where we can work to develop a theory of the political work we do. In talking about theory we would rather encourage controversy than push a political line; we may make everyone a little uncomfortable in the process, but, when you're not comfortable where you are sitting, you move, and that's the point. We are especially interested in learning how to talk about politics clearly, without rhetoric or jargon, so that everyone can understand and participate in the discussions in our pages. Language is one of our most important tools. We need to share our skills in using it so that we can communicate more clearly, and, in a culture where cordless telephones and super-strength deodorants are called "revolutionary," we need a language that belongs to us and our needs, not to the needs of large corporations and the rich.

We are a collective of six white faggots; two of us come from privileged working class backgrounds, four of us from middle class backgrounds. Our collective, and this journal, are named after Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) who was a militant German socialist and sexual liberationist. He worked both singly and organizationally toward the repeal of anti-homosexual laws in Europe, raising consciousness and rallying support for gay rights throughout his life. His projects, including the renowned Institute for Sexual Science, as well as the homosexual rights movement he spearheaded, were obliterated by the Nazi Party.

Our first issue is a sampling of the different things we would like to do. There is also a lot we don't have that we would like. We would like to see more art and fiction, and, to keep us from becoming too self-important, a lot more humor. A lot of revolutionary strength and insight these days comes from Third World and working class people; not enough of that shows here. Therefore,

we encourage everyone to submit articles, poems, photographs, art, or letters.

We have decided for now not to accept paid advertising, and it isn't easy for any of us to come up with the money it takes to publish. Our price is already higher than we would like; even so, printing and postage costs are going to pinch us in the months ahead. Therefore we are going to have to rely on the support of our readers. If you feel you have a stake in what *Magnus* is doing, we can use whatever help you can give. If you are able to give \$25 or more, write us for details on how your contribution can be made tax-deductible.

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To those who seize their strength, the women and men who have danced us over the edge, including Lester; Richard Wagner; Susan Sontag; Murray Edelman; Bella; Gertrude and Alice; Susan Saxe for her Amazon strengths; Hammond, Indiana; LSD; the feminist visions of Chris Williamson; Black Elk; the Morton Street Pier; Sister Roberta Frances; rain-wet sidewalks; the lowly Dinteranthus; John Borrego; Land's End; Ron Carter; Denise Levertov; the people of Tierra Amarilla; Anna Vinter; the people of Viet Nam; the San Quentin Six; the Weather Underground Organization if they would get their gay analysis together; Lily Tomlin; Dozor; the Butterfly Dreams of Flora Purim, Art Simon, Ron Lanza, and Blackberri.

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Robert Morgan is a painter who lives in San Francisco.

Michael Starkman still longs to learn to tap dance.

Lupine Child: texture, color, form, laughter, anger, concern. That's me. Alias Timo.

On Our Identity As Faggots

Final version written by rama, incorporating three short papers by Tom Kennedy and ideas and criticisms by Richard Wilson and Michael Rosner.

One of the purposes of this article is to sharpen our understanding of the word "faggot." The word isn't new, and we realize we aren't inventing it, although we are trying to give it a more precise definition than it has had up to now. We expect that a lot of people will disagree with our conclusions, and we encourage responses of all kinds.

Magnus has chosen to identify itself as a "journal of collective faggotry." To us "collective faggotry" is both a cultural identity and a strategy for gaining power both in our personal lives and in society as a whole. We know now that gay people have a very long history. We existed in prehistoric matrilineal societies where inheritance passed through the mother instead of the father, and we have existed in every race in every class in every part of the world since then. (1) We still do. That is a key reason that the gay liberation movement is so complex. On one very important level gay liberation means simply the freedom to be an openly gay person and not be subject to discrimination in jobs, housing, health care, or child custody—to have the right to live just like everyone else, only be gay. Entire organizations are built around fighting for these democratic rights. But for us questions of gay liberation go even deeper and challenge the very cultural, economic, and political assumptions on which our society is based. Also we know from practical experience that there are many issues that deeply divide the gay movement. We will examine some of them in this article.

We are writing the following discussion from the point of view of faggot-identified white working class and middle class gay men. We want to talk

about who faggots are, what we think faggots are in revolt against, and what we are fighting for. At the same time we will be talking about how faggots fit into the gay liberation movement and the broader movement for social change. In doing so we will need to use a few words that at times may scare people off such as sexism, racism, classism, capitalism, socialism, colonization, and imperialism. We feel these words express important concepts and we hope to use them as *tools* to develop our understanding, in a way that avoids rhetoric and jargon, and not as weapons of sectarian ideology. Our goal in writing is to help develop a strategy for building the gay liberation movement into an increasingly powerful force for social change. Because the *Magnus* Collective is all men who are from fairly similar backgrounds, we realize that our analysis can only go so far. However we hope that it will generate a lot of letters and articles, particularly from non-white and working class gay men and from women, that will deepen our analysis, bring out other perspectives on the issues we raise, raise new issues, and significantly widen the scope of future issues of *Magnus*. Ultimately we hope all of this talk will be translated into *action*; otherwise it is useless.

The original meaning of the word "Faggot" is "A bundle of twigs or sticks." In the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church carried out a systematic butchery, known as the Inquisition, of all people who believed in anything other than their strict Christian ideology. Among the victims of the Inquisition were a number of mainly rural cultures that lived in close harmony with nature and worshipped natural processes and nature spirits. These societies gave a very high status to women and to gayness and often their worship included ritualized gay sex. Countless millions of these people were labelled "witches" and "heretics" and slaughtered by the church *solely because they existed* and not for anything they had done. (2) Often the women were burned at the stake and gay men were used as kindling to ig-

nite them. That is probably how gay men came to be called faggots. Since that time "faggot" has been a fighting word—the equivalent of "nigger," "spic," and "kike." Nevertheless, it is a very important word to many gay men, especially those of us who are white (it reflects white people's history), and an increasing number of us identify ourselves as faggots for a number of reasons. Every time we use the word we remind ourselves that we are not alone; we are a people with a history that has been kept from us. On one hand it is a very beautiful history of gentle men loving men, living in harmony in nature with women and children; on the other hand it is a history of hate, discrimination, torture, murder, and the denial of our very right to exist. Faggot-identified gay men understand that we live in a society that is at war with us. For that reason we don't seek assimilation into that society. We don't want "a piece of the pie." Rather, we are learning revolutionary skills and are working for a total *structural* transformation of society—economic, political, and cultural. Gay rights *alone* won't accomplish this transformation.

Gayness in the United States cuts across sex, race, and class, and in many ways gay people are a microcosm of the whole society. Therefore it's not surprising that three of the things that most divide the country—class, race, and the oppression of women—are the three things that most divide the gay movement. In proceeding we want to look at gay liberation in terms of four contradictions. First of all, the contradiction between straight and gay people, then the three main contradictions that exist within the gay liberation movement—race (white/non-white or Third World), class (big business/workers and poor people), and man/woman.

For the most part the gay movement is dominated by white middle class men. Since the Gay Liberation Fronts ended, the issues have centered mainly around democratic rights for gay people—the contradiction between straight and gay. Non-white gay peo-

ple, gay people from working class backgrounds who were often less skilled in middle class speech than those from the middle class, and lesbians for the most part felt uncomfortable in those organizations, although in San Francisco they came together around certain issues like Gay Freedom Day. In this city things have changed significantly however, with the formation of Gay American Indians (GAI), Gay Latino Alliance (GALA), the Black Gay Caucus, the Working Class Caucus of Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL) and lesbian-dominated groups like the Cynthia Forcier Defense Committee (for lesbian child custody) that are forcing middle class gay men to deal with the issues they are raising. They all work for democratic rights for gay people, but they agree that just being gay is not enough to unite the movement. Gay rights alone will not do anything to lessen the oppression they feel as racial and national minorities, as poor people, and as women. Faggot-identified gay men, who as of now are mostly white, are joining with them, and together we are seeking a deeper basis of unity in the gay movement than we have had up to now.

One contradiction in the gay movement itself is between white and Third World gay people. "Third World" means Africa, Asia, Latin America, Northern Ireland, American Indian Nations and people in the rest of world whose ancestors came from those lands (Blacks, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans in the U.S. for example.) (The First World consists of the industrialized "western" world—the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, and Japan. The Second World consists of the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe.) *United States society has been built structurally on the exploitation of Third World people.* Every inch of land being celebrated this year was forcibly taken away from Native American people. The thirteen colonies worked in a double way. White Americans, who were fighting for economic freedom from Great Britain, were at the same time turning the land of Indian Nations into occupied

colonies which still exist. The Indians didn't join the colonists in the war with Britain. Instead, one of the issues involved in the "Revolutionary" War was the rights of rich white colonist landowners (including George Washington) to further exploit Indian lands. The Declaration of Independence itself refers to "the merciless Indian Savages." Read it! Anyone appalled by apartheid in Azania (South Africa) should learn more about the history of Indian reservations and the long, long list of broken treaties made between the United States government and the Indian nations.

Racial exploitation and white supremacy became institutionalized in the United States through slavery. To a very great extent the U.S. has been built on the ripped-off labor of Black people. It started in 1619 and lasted for 350 years. Africans were kidnapped on the west coast of Africa and brought to the West Indies in exchange for cotton, rice, tobacco, and molasses, from which rum was distilled. Ten to fifteen million Africans were landed in the Americas. More than that—estimates range from between 20 and 200 million—died on the way. The triangular slave trade that sent slaves to the Americas, tobacco and cotton to Europe, and rum to Africa was the very foundation of rising American capitalism. (3) After the Civil War, during reconstruction, Black people began to

get some power. They organized schools in the South, initiated attempts at land reform, and had several representatives in Congress. However, that power was viciously broken after the "compromise" treaty of 1877 that withdrew Federal troops from the South. This allowed the Southern planters to start a terrorist campaign against Blacks led by the Ku Klux Klan. There followed about 100 lynchings a year throughout the 1880s and 1890s. In 1892 there were 162 known lynchings. (4) Black reconstruction efforts were effectively broken, the landed Southern aristocracy regained power, and Black people were reduced to the role of wage slaves that they hold to this day.

In 1968, for every \$100 the average white workingman earned, the average Black workingman earned \$68.60. The average white workingwoman earned \$58.20 and the average Black workingwoman earned \$45.00. Every gap is widening, not equalizing. In 1969 half of all *employed* Black women had incomes of \$3,000 or less per year. (5)

Institutionalized racism—in jobs, housing, government, and the basic assumptions of most white people—is one of the foundations of America's influence and power. After colonizing Native American lands, the United States seized over half of Mexico in the Mexican-American War. As soon as the war ended, Anglo-Americans sys-

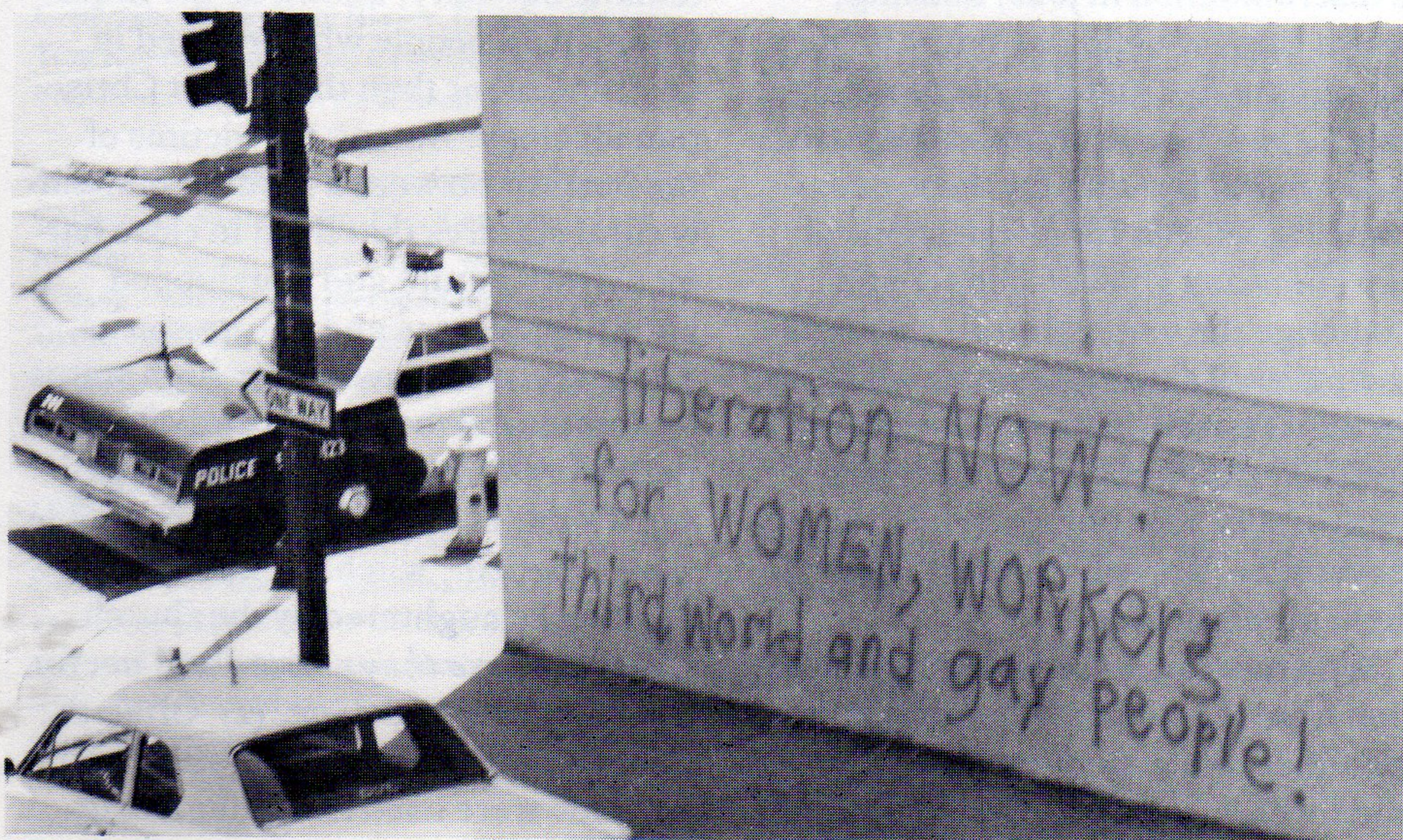


photo by Tom Kennedy

tematically violated the terms of settlement, stealing millions of acres out from under the Spanish-speaking people of the Southwest and attempting to destroy their culture by imposing a foreign language and alien laws and institutions. Mexico itself became a reserve of cheap labor, imported when profitable, then rounded up and shipped back when no longer useful.

Another colonized nation is Puerto Rico, seized in the Spanish-American War in 1898. The U.S. military alone occupies 10% of its best land. Eighty-five percent of its industry is controlled by U.S. corporations, Puerto Rican workers earn 45% less than U.S. workers doing the same job, and 52% of Puerto Rican families earn less than \$3,000 a year. Perhaps most appalling, 33% of Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age have been sterilized by U.S. government programs. (6)

To best understand the role of the United States in the world we need to understand the word "imperialism." The substance of imperialism is economic exploitation of other people supported by military, political, and cultural domination.

We will simply say that imperialism can be defined as the worldwide expression of the search for profits and the ever-increasing accumulation of surplus value by monopoly financial capital, centered in Europe, and then in North America . . . we can say that imperialism is piracy transplanted from the high seas to dry land, piracy reorganized, consolidated, and adapted to the aim of exploiting the natural and human resources of our peoples. (7)

Imperialism works in several ways. Besides direct colonized occupation there are many ways to control the governments and economies of nominally independent countries. The CIA runs rampant in the world. It helped set up and supports barbaric right-wing military dictatorships in South Korea, the Philippines, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and most of Central and South America. It manipulates politics in Portugal and Italy and anywhere else it can. It supports repressive monarchs in Jordan, Iran, and Spain, and

arms Israel and racist South Africa. (In condemning Israel we don't deny the very real and complex problem of the security and safety of the Jewish people and their right to maintain their religion and cultural identity. However, Israel was built upon and has continued to expand into lands seized from Arab people by military force. One of the reasons is a Biblical mandate about the "Promised Land." That mandate is no more a valid reason for seizing Arab lands than is the Biblical denunciation of sodomy in Leviticus a reason for oppressing gay people.)

Imperialism should be looked at as a whole: an economic, political, and cultural system achieved and maintained by violence. It feeds on the exploitation of the Third World, and Third World people are in revolt. Third World gay people are no exception. That revolt is probably the most significant factor operating in world history today. In the last two years, wars of national liberation have been successful in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique, and Angola. There are anti-imperialist national liberation movements in virtually every country of the Third World, and it appears that the tide of history is on their side.

A second contradiction in the gay movement is class. A gay landlord is still a landlord, and a gay boss is still a boss—a boss whose workers more than likely are unorganized and work for very low wages. Most gay people work for a living like everyone else, and part of our wages, instead of coming to us, are appropriated as profit—the surplus value as defined by Karl Marx. According to Marx, land and natural resources belong to the community—to the entire people and not just a few individuals. The sole source of wealth is the labor used to produce products. All other "wealth" is based on profit that is expropriated from those who actually do the work by the small group of people who control the land, natural resources, and the factories. That includes all "wealth" based on real estate, stocks, bonds, interest, and inheritance. That group of people is called the bourgeoisie or the ruling

class, and they are very powerful. In the United States, 1.6% of the population controls 32% of the wealth. The Rockefellers control 20% of banking in the U.S. and 20% of all its industry. (8) The wealth and power derived from controlling the means of production are translated into political power and the power to control the intellectual and cultural life of the country. Every Secretary of State and Defense since World War II has been tied to the Rockefeller family. Politics in the U.S. is strictly a game for the very rich: witness all the corporate bribes in the Nixon regime. And how many poor people can afford to enter the twenty-eight or so primaries that were held this year? Two very important reasons Carter is the Democratic nominee are because he is independently wealthy (from manipulating the future sales of peanuts) and because his main foreign policy advisor comes out of the Rockefeller family brain trust. The ruling class uses wages expropriated from workers to install governments that then prevent workers from organizing to change their conditions—also called having your cake and eating it too.

Gay as well as straight workers are victims of this system based on the greedy accumulation of money or capital called capitalism, and gay workers and poor people are demanding that the gay liberation movement work to end capitalist exploitation of *all* workers and replace it with a socialist system based on an equal and just distribution that is genuinely responsive to our needs of jobs, housing, health care, and sexual freedom. Socialism means the poor and oppressed people taking back what the rich have stolen from us and which is rightfully ours.

There were four conditions that were extremely important to the rise of capitalism and its development into imperialism. They are the technology of the industrial revolution, the availability of a large supply of cheap labor, the accumulation of capital, and the development of foreign markets. (9) These conditions came together first in England in the late eighteenth century, and consequently England be-

came the most powerful country in the world. The search for cheap labor and greater profits led first England, then the rest of Europe, the U.S., and Japan into a race to see who could colonize the world first. By the use of brutal military force England built her empire by directly colonizing twenty-eight overseas territories between 1814 and 1906. (10) When the English empire began to crumble in World War I, the main beneficiary was the United States.

After the Civil War, American industry and finance capital became increasingly concentrated and grew into monstrous monopolistic corporate entities that were and still are laws unto themselves. The Rockefeller family (Standard Oil) had a world monopoly on oil production. Carnegie (United States Steel) controlled the entire steel production of the U.S. The railroads and many other basic industries were completely monopolized by just a few people and families. These monopoly corporations were the forerunners of what are now called multinational corporations. There are about 200 of them, mostly centered in the U.S., but they have subsidiaries all over the world and are structured so that they operate outside the laws of any one country and owe allegiance only to themselves. When it becomes profitable to do so, they move entire areas of production out of the U.S. altogether, leaving American workers jobless. This is particularly true in such labor-intensive industries as textiles and electronics (notice the "Made in Korea" tags on clothing). The multinationals are ruthless and are interested only in profit. Their power is awesome, and they don't hesitate to use it. A good example is Chile where several multinationals, led by ITT, Anaconda Copper, Kennecott Copper, and Rockefeller banking interests, in cahoots with the CIA, subsidized the overthrow of the democratically-elected Chilean government and the murder of President Salvador Allende. He was replaced with perhaps the most brutal military dictatorship in the world today. It is documented that gay

people were brutally tortured and murdered by the military junta. (11)

It is important to understand how economic exploitation, political control, and cultural conditioning are totally integrated into the imperialist system. *Gay oppression, particularly, comes from cultural definitions of sexual roles.* Those cultural definitions in the western world grow from those of the Judeo-Christian religion, a system which demands worship of a single bloodthirsty male god. They are reinforced by the economic relations between classes of people that have grown out of capitalism and imperialism. All over the world the militaristic evangelism of Christianity colonized and destroyed the nature cultures which had given respect to women and gayness. In their place Christianity imposed a culture characterized by urbanization, militarism, violence, male supremacy, rigidly-defined sex roles, sexual repression, authoritarianism, and a thought system which came to value the intellect over nature and the body—over the totality of being. The result is an ocean of faceless corporation executives whose "rational" decisions to "maximize profits" create a totally insane system that makes sense only to those caught up in its own closed circular frame of reference—an economic, political, and cultural whole.

The oppression of women is both cultural and economic.

Sexism is enforced and perpetuated by the imperial culture. From birth, women are taught to think of ourselves as weak in body and mind, passive, second-rate, dependent objects. The organization of society teaches and reinforces the inferiority of women. Through schools we are channeled and directed to prepare for marriage and sex-segregated jobs, denied a full contribution. Later these same schools blame mothers for the "failure" of children to learn to read. The media portrays women as empty-headed, sexy and addicted consumers. Older women are shunted aside, doped, ridiculed and patronized—cut off from useful work and creativity.

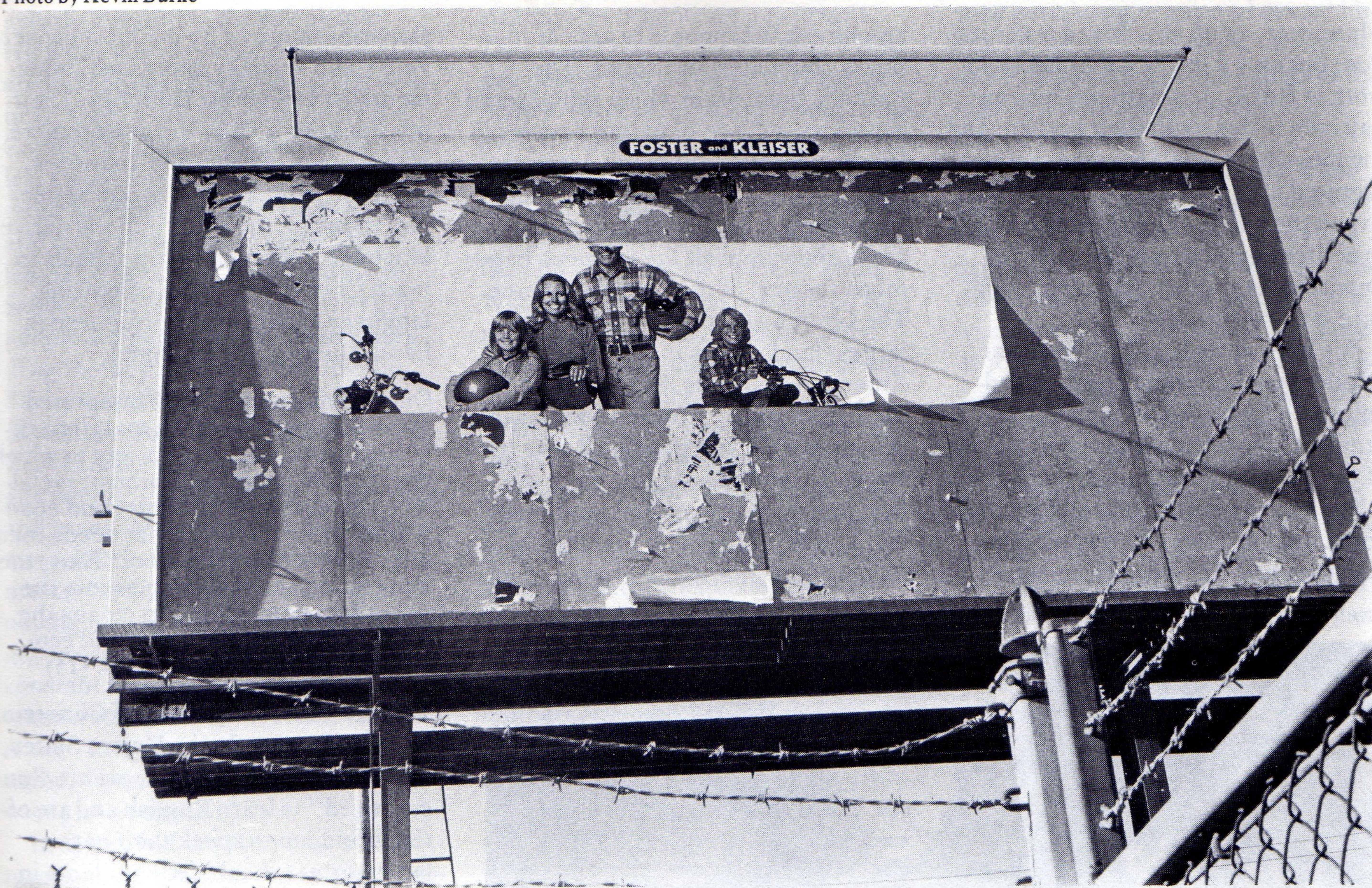
We are taught that our biology is our destiny. We are conditioned to look and act within narrow confines to ful-

fill our primary role as sexual partners and reproducers. Distorted and competitive standards of beauty are the surface over a whole system of sexual objectification. We live in an anti-life culture, where women are denied control of our bodies—where sexual repression and taboos go hand in hand with prostitution and sexual exploitation. Men are taught to use women.

The underside of this objectification is rape—a massive, brutal system of terror perpetrated on women by men. Most rapes are not reported so the statistics are far lower than the reality but attacks on women constitute the fastest growing category of crime in the U.S. The paralyzing fear of rape and sexual abuse, fanned by media and police warnings, adds up to an unofficial curfew for women.

The oppression of women perverts the cultural values of the whole society. Men are alienated from children and from human emotion. Women are cut off from one another, threatened and competing. Sexism is a form of cultural conditioning which enables the system to exploit everyone. (12)

Perhaps the best example of how cultural and economic exploitation are integrated into imperialism is its basic economic and social unit, the nuclear family. Although the family plays many roles in many different cultures, in imperial America the basic cultural unit of white economic power is the father-dominated nuclear family. Our entire acculturation process—schools, churches, the media, and psychiatry—trains us that the only normal way to live is as part of a heterosexual nuclear family where we each have an assigned role either as father, mother, or child. This system oppresses Third World people, regardless of the role of the family in their own cultures, because it is built into imperialism. Nuclear families are organized into domestic work units. The father earns the money for the whole family. The wife keeps his house, raises his children, and provides him with sexual services in exchange for room and board, spending money, and social respectability. It forces the wife to be economically, sexually, and emotionally dependent on the husband to have her needs met. Both husband and wife have power over the children, who are



totally dependent on their parents for survival.

In learning to obey parents, children learn obedience in general. The deference in the family setting will manifest itself whenever the child faces a "superior" in later life. Sexual repression—by the already sexually repressed parents—is an integral part of the conditioning process. (13)

The whole corporate job market is an extension of the white nuclear family structure. The directors are straight authoritarian men, the clerical workers are mainly women (and gay men), and the whole workplace functions as "one big happy family." Both the gay and women's liberation movements challenge the nuclear family structure. Both help to break down traditional sex role models for men and women. Gay relationships, because they involve people of the same sex who are generally economically independent of each other, have the potential to be more free of hierarchy than traditional man-wife relationships. The subservience and exploitation of women in

the nuclear family clearly benefits capitalism. A movement that helps women become more assertive and gain more power over their lives threatens it. Likewise the refusal of gay people to play into straight role models, and our social (family) autonomy and independence threaten patriarchal (father-dominated) capitalism and forces it to condemn such a lifestyle as deviant and immoral. The educational system, the legal system, the churches, television and other mass media, and a large percentage of psychiatrists form the cultural armor of capitalism to defend it from homosexuality. It is in this context that the oppression of heterosexual women, lesbians, and gay men is one link between male supremacy (sexism) and imperialism.

Working women are doubly exploited if they have family responsibilities as well as a paying job, and the oppression is even greater for Third World working women, because they suffer from racism as well as sexism. Unemployment is much higher for

Third World people, especially women. There are 35 million working women in the United States—49% of all women between 18 and 64. Thirty-seven percent of white working women have children under five, compared to 51% of Black working women. (14) As stated above, for every \$100 a white man earns, a white woman earns \$58.20 and a Black woman earns \$45.00.

The third contradiction in the gay liberation movement is the sexism of gay men. Up until now the tendency has been for white lesbians to work either in the women's movement or in autonomous lesbian organizations. Many lesbians are separatists, most of whom are white. They view men as the enemy, instead of imperialism, and refuse to work organizationally with men. Third World lesbians, as well as Third World straight women, who suffer from double and triple oppression, are much more likely to work in mixed organizations with men. In San Francisco, both GALA and GAI are functionally mixed. BAGL, which is mainly

white, was set up as a mixed organization, but only a few women choose to work in BAGL. Lesbians are forcing gay men to deal with their sexism, and the movement won't become more integrated until we become more sensitive to the needs of lesbians and begin to address ourselves more to issues important to women, like rape, child-care, and sterilization.

We have already talked about the relationship between economic and cultural imperialism in the nuclear family. Cultural domination is also one of the most important tools that imperialists use to solidify their control over conquered peoples. Protestant missionaries and Catholic priests were

among the first people to appear in newly conquered territories. The Catholic Inquisition which slaughtered countless millions of native peoples in Europe was brought to the Americas by the Spanish and used in the most sadistic ways to subvert native religions and establish the religious hegemony (power) of the Catholic Church. The Church also became one of the largest landowners in most Latin American countries. Schools were set up to brainwash colonized peoples into thinking like white people all over the world. Oftentimes schools were the first project of priests and missionaries. The Wycliffe Bible Translators is a modern-day international gang of mis-

sionaries financed by the most conservative and sexually-repressed fundamentalist evangelist churches. Their missionaries go into the most remote jungle areas of colonized countries, learn the language of a group of people, translate the Bible into the native language, and then set up schools to teach Christianity and a colonizing language (Spanish or Portuguese in Latin America, for example).

Once deculturated, the "integrated" Indians are forced into a marginal situation: culturally, in a society to which they cannot completely adjust; racially, as an excluded minority; and economically, in a system that needs them only as a surplus labor pool. Thus, the integration of tribal peoples into the prevailing national group means the disintegration of the social and economic life of their own group. (15)

This has been the pattern of Christianity for centuries. In the United States, non-English-speaking people are "encouraged" to learn English and are often forbidden to speak their native language at school. "A" students in Spanish quickly become "D" students in English (which better prepares them for the job market that awaits them.) *"Colonization is a process of changing the behavior of a people to suit the desires of the colonizer—that is also at base, the definition of slavery."* (16) Imperialism forces colonized peoples to believe in imperialist gods, speak imperialist languages, and think imperialist thoughts, as well as do exploiting imperialist labor for subsistence wages.

Homosexuality was part of the religious and cultural practices of native peoples throughout the world before imperialism. Homosexual sex is natural, normal, beautiful, and a lot of fun. Homophobia, or the fear and hatred of homosexuality, and its resultant forms of gay oppression, are products of the Judeo-Christian cultural heritage and are structurally built into the western imperialist system. Homophobia is a product of cultural imperialism, and consequently gay people are *culturally* colonized people. We are made to think we are sick and abnormal. The alienation built into capitalism is



photo by Daniel Arcos

greatly intensified for gay people. High gay suicide and alcoholism rates are indications of isolation and loneliness. Gays were slaughtered by the Catholic Church, slaughtered by Hitler, slaughtered by Stalin, and slaughtered by Fascist dictatorships in Chile and Argentina. This is genocide no less than My Lai or Wounded Knee. Schools and churches teach that gay people are perverts. Psychiatry uses drug therapy, aversion therapy, behavior modification, shock therapy, castration, and clitoridectomies in efforts to make us "normal." Openly gay people, especially effeminate men and assertive women, are among the most discriminated against in the job market and are often forced into low paying jobs or working for exploiting gay bosses. Gay parents live in the constant fear their children will be taken away from them. Homosexuality is the "love that dare not speak its name," because homophobic society won't let us speak it.

In spite of all the economic and cultural sanctions against openly gay people, there comes a time for us when the need to be gay is more important than the need for the safety of hiding our gayness. This moment when we finally admit our gayness to ourselves is called "coming out." Coming out causes a change in our material conditions. It changes the way we look at society (at the very least in terms of affectional relationships), and it changes the way society will look at us if we come out publicly. It can involve risking family ties, jobs, social status, and increases the possibility of confrontation with the police and courts. All of these risks, except perhaps for family ties, *are greater the less privilege a person has in society.* A white middle class gay man will usually have an easier time getting a job and will have less hassle with the police and State bureaucracy than, say a Black lesbian welfare mother who suffers from racist, sexist, and class oppression as well as gay oppression. This is an extremely important point for the gay liberation movement to understand, and one we must keep in mind as we develop our

strategy for organizing gay people. That is one reason many Third World gay people feel the need to organize more around racism than homophobia, even if that involves working in groups that are mainly straight, because they feel that racism restricts their freedom and their ability to earn a living more than gay oppression. Even in Third World gay groups, issues related to racism, sexism, and class are often more important than issues involving gay and sexual liberation.

To summarize, gay people are culturally colonized people. Gay oppression comes mainly from cultural definitions of sexual roles that have been built into American society. Women are economically exploited both at home and on the job. They are culturally trained to be passive sex objects for men, housekeepers, and mothers. Men are trained to dominate women and to compete with each other for economic power and social position. Gayness is thought to be sick and perverse. It challenges traditional sexual role models and poses a viable alternative to the basic social and economic unit of capitalism, the nuclear family. Coming out as gay can be an important step toward breaking through our educational and cultural upbringing and towards seeing capitalist society for what it really is. When we come out publicly we risk our jobs, our family support, and increase the risk of confrontation with the police, courts, and State bureaucracy. Middle class white men, who dominate the gay liberation movement, although oppressed because they are gay, benefit from imperialism because they are white, because they are men, and because they have middle class educations and expectations about "success." Because of the risk involved it is more difficult for working class and Third World people to come out, because it is harder for them to find and keep jobs. For that reason it is important for the gay liberation movement to organize around the needs of the most oppressed gay people—gay workers and poor people, gay Third World people, and lesbians. As we address is-

sues pertaining to gay and sexual liberation we need to keep in mind that those issues are just one aspect of the movement for social change in the United States.

The perversion of sexuality, especially through advertising, is one of the most powerful tools the ruling class uses to manipulate the working class. Advertising makes sex objects out of women and men. It is used to induce us to buy things we don't need to support a profit system that exploits us. It is used to make us feel insecure if we don't possess a certain product. It increases our alienation and our sense of being alone. It breaks down any sense of community we feel with each other and helps create enormous class barriers between those who can and cannot afford to buy useless products. And it all revolves around sex.

Western society is obsessed with sex. Sex is often seen as an individual solution to very deep societal problems. Workers are told it's their sex life, not their bosses, that make them unhappy. Housewives are told it's their sex life, not the capitalist exploitation of women, that is the root of their troubles, and so on. Gay liberationists, particularly those whose chief oppression is being gay, tend to feel that they carry the entire weight of the capitalist system just because they are gay, and that is just not so. To emphasize only gay issues isolates us from the broader movement for social change. We need to work in autonomous gay groups. We need to study and analyze sexuality and gayness, and we need to demand that straight people deal with us in a principled way. But once that happens, and it is beginning to happen in San Francisco, we need to realize there are a lot of other issues—racism, sexism, and class oppression to name three—that we have to deal with if we are going to help reshape our society.

Capitalism has an enormous ability to coopt issues. Much of the organized labor movement in the last forty years has been turned into a lackey of the Mafia and the CIA. Most organized labor supported the American war in

Viet Nam for years, and the international AFL-CIO was instrumental in setting up the overthrow of Allende's government in Chile. The gay liberation movement, which poses a much less direct threat to capitalism than the labor movement, is in danger of being coopted also. It is true that coming out is a very important step for most gay people, because in coming out we begin to understand how much we differ from societal expectations of what we should be. However coming out as gay doesn't mean we also come out as anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-imperialist. It doesn't mean we are automatically going to work to change the basic structure of society that causes gay oppression in the first place. Coming out is an *individual* response to a very important contradiction in capitalism, and coming out is all some people need to be satisfied, particularly if they have a fairly good income and no one else to support. It will take a lot more than that to fundamentally change the homophobic imperialist system of government that oppresses gay people, and a lot of gay people are just plain not interested.

"Gay" is rapidly being bought off and assimilated into the capitalist system. It is chic to be seen in gay places. Gay novels are on the best seller list. Sgt. Matlovich makes the cover of *Time*. A mass of non-militant white middle class homosexuals who long for acceptance and assimilation at any price will be quick to accept heterosexual standards of how they should behave in exchange for a comfortable life. Although there are rigid homophobes who will make no compromise regarding their abomination for anything not heterosexual, the majority of Americans generally seem willing to tolerate and even accept gays, as long as they behave, couple off into respectable living situations, hold respectable jobs, and stay away from children; then it's O.K. Many gays are buying into this. Worse yet, they are allowing their visions and their potential to remain colonized by capitalist heterosexual standards. "Gays" long for respectability in a system that

grants respectability only if one abides by the rules of the game—a game whose essence is the exploitation of women, workers, Third World people, and ultimately themselves. What "gay" comes down to is a lavender minstrel show or a lavender world's fair. "Camp it up queers, be witty on Hollywood Squares, keep dancing on the Cher show, keep writing Broadway plays about the existential agony of life—you can be who you are as long as you serve us and don't remind us how many times we have murdered you, how many times we have denied you a whole existence." "Gay" is being bought off, and if you don't believe it, read *The Advocate*.

On the other hand, faggotry means searching for *collective* solutions to gay oppression. It means ending homophobia at its source. It means challenging imperialism on every level—economic, cultural, and political. It means understanding that coming out as gay is only one step to awareness and that coming out as a Human Being never ends. It means understanding the suffering of others—of enduring and militant Black men locked up and tortured in prison; of farmworkers who do stoop labor day after day year after year, going hungry themselves as they work to feed the cities; of secretaries chained to typewriters; of eight-year-old sissy boys and tomboy girls who are tormented at school by their classmates; of the sixty year old gay man who cries himself to sleep at night out of loneliness. Faggotry means feeling the suffering of others, and it means joining together with *all* oppressed people to end *all* suffering due to capitalist exploitation. In a word, faggotry means revolution.

This has been the first of at least two articles. Future articles will deal with developing a strategy for organizing gay people, faggot fantasies of the future, gay workers, and the situation of gay people in socialist countries. We welcome criticism of the above article, as well as letters and articles that seek to deepen our analysis.

- (1) For this and all future general references to gay history, see Arthur Evans' series of articles in *Fag Rag*, especially "Homosexuality and Class Warfare", *Fag Rag*, Feb/March, 1976, pp. 18-22. (Box 331, Kenmore Station, Boston MA 02215).
- (2) Arthur Evans, "The Mass Murder of Women and Gays", *Fag Rag*, Summer 1975, p. 13.
- (3) The Weather Underground Organization, *Prairie Fire*, p. 48. Available from John Brown Book Club, P.O. Box 22383, Seattle, WA 98122.
- (4) Felix Greene, *The Enemy*, Vintage Books, 1971, p. 29.
- (5) "Third World Women," *Seize the Time*, (P.O. Box 4064, Mountain View, CA 94040), April 1976, p. 6.
- (6) Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, "National Demonstration July 4th, 1976", (pamphlet), (P.O. Box 319, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003.)
- (7) *Prairie Fire*, quoting Amilcar Cabral, p. 78.
- (8) *Prairie Fire*, p. 110.
- (9) *The Enemy*, p. 52.
- (10) See the list in *The Enemy*, p. 58.
- (11) "Chile," *The Lavender and Red Book, A Gay Liberation/Socialist Anthology*, Lavender & Red Union (P.O. Box 3503, Hollywood, CA 90028), p. 37.
- (12) *Prairie Fire*, p. 128.
- (13) Maurice Brinton, *Authoritarian Conditioning, Sexual Repression, and the Irrational in Politics*, Philadelphia Solidarity, (GPO Box 13011, Philadelphia, PA 19101), p. 24.
- (14) *Seize the Time*, p. 6.
- (15) Laurie Hart, "Pacifying the Last Frontiers", *NACLA'S Latin American and Empire Report*, Vol. VII, No. 10, December, 1973, (Box 226, Berkeley, CA 94701), p. 15. See also "Christian Missionaries and Cultural Imperialism," *Akwesasne Notes*, Early Spring, 1976, pp. 26-27. (Mohawk Nation, via Roosevelttown, NY 13683.)
- (16) John Mohawk, "Steps to Sovereignty", *Harvest*, #1, Santa Barbara, California.

"Why is it when we talk to God we're said to be praying, but when God talks to us we're schizophrenic." (Lily Tomlin on *Modern Scream*)

After Hearing Heterosexual Poets In October 1974: What It Seems Like To Write A Male Homosexual Love Poem Now

Joseph Cady

It is to be without the staple references
of male heterosexual poets.

It is to be without a wife whose beauty and faithfulness
can be mentioned convivially to audiences at readings.

It is to be without a son whose discovery of the world
can be turned into a parable of the loss of innocence
that demonstrates our wonder and sorrow.

It is to be without an exhaustive history of mistresses,
whose delicious parts can be listed as marks of our
lustiness
or whose riddle can be claimed as the source of our pain.

It is to cut the ties of such familiar images,
to start again at the first cries of speech,
over and over, inventing our voices,
until our unheard-of testimony
transforms the understanding of reality irrevocably.

New language
in amazement
from this plain statement:
I am a man; you are a man; I love you.

Starting 1973: What To Do Now That Peace Has Been Announced

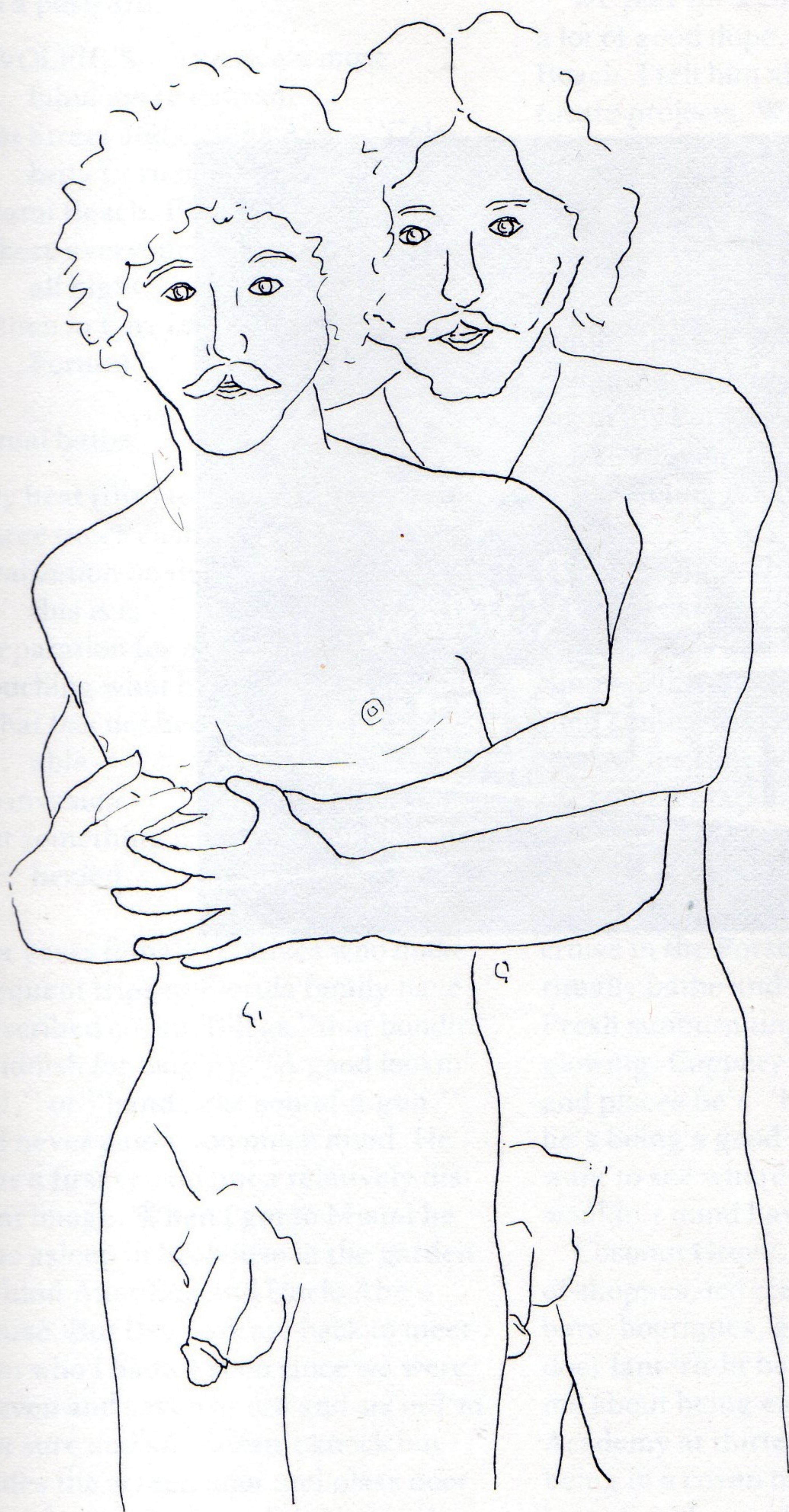
Joseph Cady

At the end of January you again will see
the man you had been waiting to meet for months
and at last you'll go up and say you'd like to meet him.

This man will go home with you later from the bar
after saying that he hardly ever goes home with anyone
anymore:

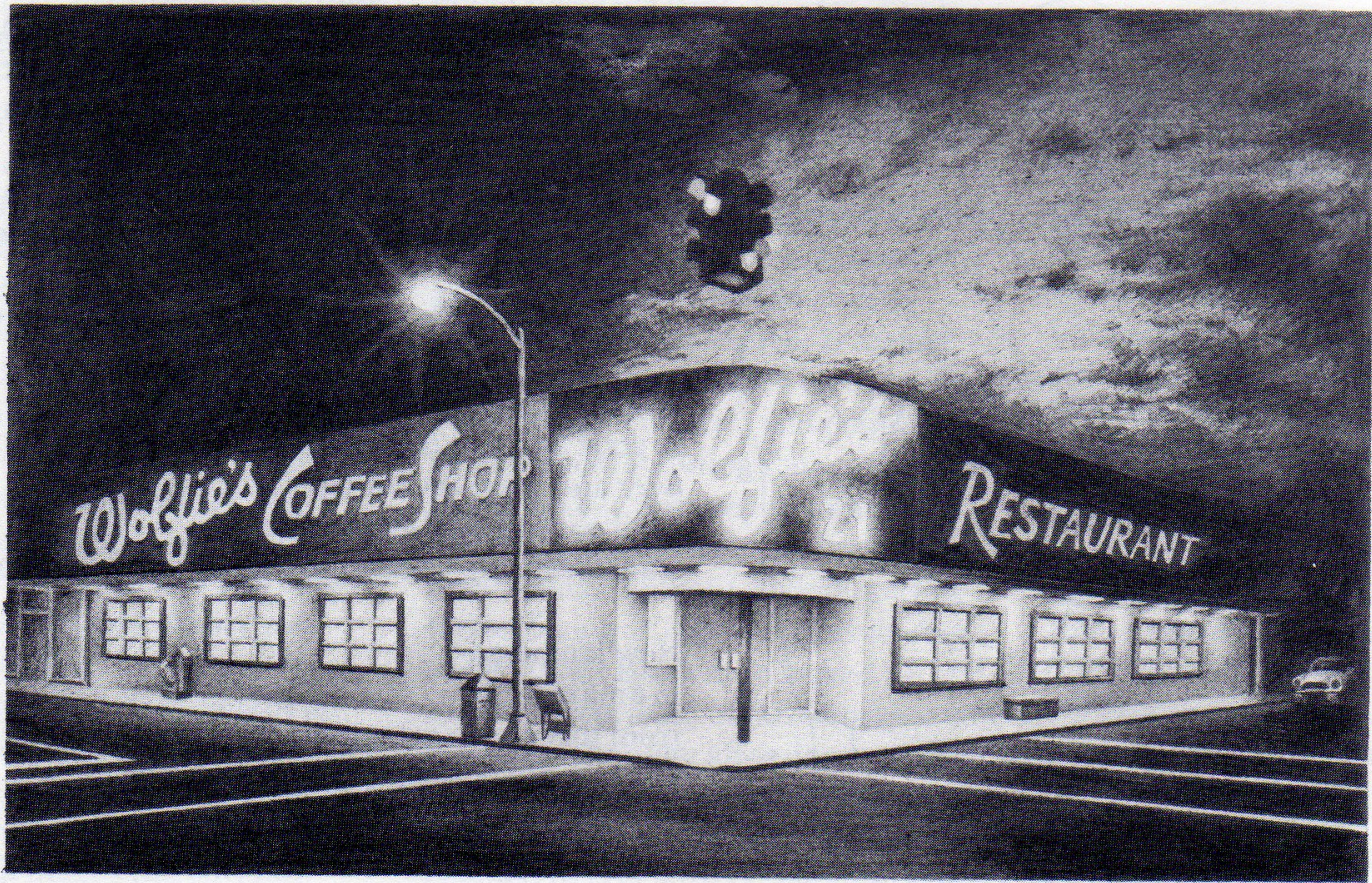
you will tell him he is beautiful;
he will tell you you are beautiful;
you will sleep side by side every night for two months.

Then at Easter this lover
will knock you breathless and leave you:
he will say that he never felt joy in the relationship;
he will tell you he can no longer hold in his violence.



drawing by Robert Morgan

Joseph Cady is a writer and psychotherapist in
New York City, an organizer of the Gay Academic
Union there, and formerly taught English at Col-
umbia and Rutgers.



Fragments of Metaphysical Pornography

Martin Worman

On a postcard:

"WOLFIE'S—America's most
fabulous restaurant
21st Street and Collins Ave—"Cele-
brity Corner"
Miami Beach, Florida.
Where everyone meets to eat . . . open
all night.
(When in Fort Lauderdale, visit the
Forum)"

Ritual baths:

Dry heat (fire) to cold water to steam.
Three times each.
Realization on the third cycle that what
this is is
preparation for male mysteries.
Touching what has not been touched
What has not been previously touch-
able
no invasion
but something is broken (through) and
healed.

For years female relatives who make
frequent trips to Florida family have
described cousin Bill as "that bonditt"
(Yiddish for bandit); "A good lookin'
kid;" or "handsome son-of-a-gun."
I'd never paid it too much mind. He
was a first cousin but a relatively dis-
tant image. When I got to Miami he
was asleep in his house in the garden
behind Aunt Bea and Uncle Abe's
house. But Bea took me back to meet
him who I hadn't seen since we were
eleven and seven or ten and six or I'm
not sure and she doesn't knock but
slides the screen door and glass door
closed against airconditioning and
rouses him in his red briefs.

A Jewish wolf like me only the Foxy-
lady fantasy. His cheekbones more
strongly defined. The hollows more

Martin Worman is a theater worker.
drawing by Michael Starkman

angular. Darker. A good head of tight
brown curls and full moustache. He is
a campus cop. Florida International
University. CIA-funding for children of
Cuban exiles. He coaches the Dade
County State Trooper basketball team.
He has application into the regular
Miami police force. Fucks a lot of
women. Handsome son-of-a-gun.

We play for a couple of days. Smoke
a lot of good dope. Go to Haulover
Beach. I tell him about past, present,
future projects. We talk about being
single men. I tell him about my fas-
cination with wolves. Wolves in packs.
Single men as lone wolves. He likes
that one a lot. His Yiddish name is Vel-
fela—Little Wolf—and his Hebrew
name, Zev—Wolf. What news! I'm
delighted! Moving right along. Driv-
ing in his Porsche. Riding on his Moto
Guzzi. Moving right along through
paint peeling off art deco Miami
Beach.

Friday night Shabos (sabbath) fam-
ily dinner at which I use the pronoun
'her' for God and wink. Bea thinks it's
funny. Bill's mouth opens in surprise,
then smiles; and Abe, who spends
most of his time with prayer books and
the commentaries says once strongly,
sternly "God is not a woman."

Bill and I split after super-delicious
food for a Friday night Miami-area
cruise in the Porsche. First we each
ritually bathe and primp to look casual.
Fresh sunburn tingles. We are
glowing. Coppery huntsmen to areas
and places he's "heard about," 'cause
he's being a good host and knows I
want to see where the boys are and he
wouldn't mind having a look.

Coconut Grove. Chi-chi municipality
of shoppes, ice cream parlors, gay
bars, boutiques, galleries. In an out-
door lantern-lit beer garden he tells
me about being expelled from Hebrew
Academy at thirteen or fourteen for
being in a coven of nine boys under the
loving guidance of one teacher and
how he was never attacked as the of-
ficial story had it. How he was institu-
tionalized into straightness when he
entered the public junior high 'cause
"it was too difficult to do anything
else;" although one of the Hebrew

Academy nine remained his lover for
nearly a year afterward but he's not
been with him or any male since.

Another pitcher of beer and another
topic which he finally cuts short and
reaches across the rough-hewn carved-
initials beer garden table for my
shoulders! "For years you've been a
myth to me. But you're here. You're
real, Martin. It feels so good. You've
come through the wall!"

He calls himself a chameleon.
Everytime I walk through the garden
from his house to Bea and Abe's or
back at least one lizard scurries along
across about the path. An amoral
dope-smoking cop on a largely CIA-
funded campus. The girlfriend is a
dealer handling pills and good grass
out of a high bougie garden apart-
ment. He and his friends are well-knit,
well-dressed. I could get suspicious. I
could get paranoid. Mod Squad is a
strong role model.

Back to his house from Coconut
Grove for a nightcap of the fine dope.
There we are laid back and the thought
passes but my work includes not com-
ing on to straight men. We hug good-
night. I cross the garden to Bea and
Abe's house to sleep in the guest
room.

Not for long, of course. After about
twenty minutes there's a tap on the
window and Bill standing naked in the
garden, I open the casement window,
closed against airconditioning and he
says all in one breath, "I'm masturbat-
ing on the floor of my room and you are
my fantasy and why should I fantasize
when the reality is just a few yards
away and I've never done this before
I'm shaking all over."

"I'll be right out," I tell him and roll
back the window.

I take my time. Find my jeans. Move
slowly. Certain Bea or Abe will hear
my coming and going. Cross the gar-
den. Chameleons in all directions.
Sliding door to his house already half
open. Close it behind me. He's stand-
ing naked. I keep my jeans on. Em-
brace for a real long time. He undoes
my jeans. "I've wanted to suck a cock
for such a long time," he says. "Let's
take a long time," I tell him.

After a half-hour or so the sliding door opens. We are rolling around on the floor and the candlelight is bright. Someone steps in, then out. We have frozen. I roll in one direction away from Bill and bury my head in the crook of my elbow. Long minutes pass. No words. He reaches for my shoulders. I turn and we embrace and kiss some more. We make love until we both come in each other's mouths. Swallowing the holy brother cousin wolf seed.

We didn't know if our den's intruder was Bea or Abe. But Bill's surmise, since he knows them best, was that it was Abe who'd venture out at four a.m. to find out where I went. "God is not a woman," once strongly, sternly. So she decided to show him once—strongly, sternly.



photo by Efren Ramirez

Five Fallacies About Gay History

Arthur Evans

Have you ever wondered why Gay men are called fairies? Several years ago I was intrigued by this question. I did a little research and discovered that in England "fairy" originally referred to witches. After digging a little deeper, I also found out that in many European languages names for Gay men have been derived from medieval witchcraft and heresy. For example, there's "bugger" in English, *hérte* in French, *Ketzer* in German, and *gazzarro* in Italian.

Is this just an accident of language, or does it mean something deeper? To answer this question I began a long journey of research. The result was a series of articles on Gay history, appearing first in the New York magazine *Out*, and later in the Boston-based magazine *Fag Rag*.

I discovered that there is a striking pattern in the high respect given Gay people among medieval witches, native North American Indians, the most ancient societies of Europe, and nature societies throughout Africa, Australia, and the Far East. There is also a striking pattern in the low respect given Gay people among highly militarized societies, such as ancient Rome (despite what most people mistakenly think about Gayness there), Christian Europe, and industrialized America and Russia.

I was elated to make these discover-

Arthur Evans is a 34 year old psychedelic neo-Druid presently practicing auto mechanics and trying to learn how to become a peasant. He is from a small industrial city in Pennsylvania, lived in New York and San Francisco, and hopes eventually to return to the land, where the revolution is as important as the one in the cities.

ies and eager to share them with other Gay people. My excitement soon dampened, however. I realized that many Gay people, especially males who are members of the privileged professional classes, did not really want to hear this news. Again and again, I encountered the same pattern of resistance. I began to understand how deeply we have been scarred by culture robbery. I flashed on how hard it had been even to convince other Gay people that our basic sexual drives are good. Would there now be a similar struggle to validate our cultural needs and the importance of our history?

Faced with this resistance I was able to identify five fallacies commonly held by Gay people about our own history.

FALLACY ONE: THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS GAY HISTORY

This fallacy is absurd on the face of it. All of us who have been out for any length of time know there is a vast network of Gaydom throughout the United States. Do we really believe that this suddenly emerged only in the last few years? If not, where did it come from?

Anti-Gay legislation in the United States goes back to the colonial period. In Europe, anti-Gay legislation goes all the way back to the rise of the early Roman republic. If Gay people did not exist, who were these laws aimed at? The Christian religion, taking over the worst patriarchal values of Roman civilization, condemned Gay sex acts throughout the history of the Church. What was the purpose of these laws if Gay people didn't exist?

The Kinsey studies showed that thirty-seven percent of American males have had at least one Gay orgasm between puberty and old age—and this in one of the most homophobic societies in the world! In the cross-cultural study by Ford and Beach, sixty-four percent of the societies studied viewed Gayness as *normal*. Actually, I believe this percentage is an understatement.

We have been everywhere. How can it be that we have no history?

FALLACY TWO: GAY HISTORY IS JUST A SERIES OF UNRELATED ANECDOTES

Okay, the objectors say, there's been a lot of Gay people—but that doesn't mean there's any *collective* activity to record, anything in the nature of a common Gay culture or cultures. At best, they say, all we can hope for is a series of unrelated anecdotes, for example, that Walt Whitman was Gay, or that Julius Caesar fucked the King of Bithynia.

Unfortunately, there are Gay historians who share this view. I remember recently listening to a Gay history professor in San Francisco talking about conditions in the second century Roman Empire. His "history" consisted of reading nasty excerpts from puritanical Roman satirists lampooning Gay Romans for their effeminacy. Incredible as it seems, he saw no connection between the attitude of these satirists and Roman militarism and its attendant worship of masculinity.

Despite the anecdotal approach, Gayness has been an essential part of cultures and even religions. For example, when the Christian militarists, who were urban-oriented, rose to power in the Roman state they savagely attacked the role of Gay transvestites and transsexuals in the ancient sex-and-nature religions of the countryside. Here's how Augustine viewed these old religions: "The same applies to the effeminate consecrated to the Great Mother, who violate every canon of decency in men and women. They were to be seen until just the other day in the streets and squares of Carthage with their pomaded hair and powdered faces, gliding along with womanish languor, and demanding from the shopkeepers the means of their depraved existence." (*City of God*, Penguin edition, p. 286)

In the late Middle Ages, a great wave of "heresy" broke out in Bulgaria and swept across nearly the whole of Europe. Church officials insisted that the leaders of this heresy were women and Gay people, who were accordingly killed in great numbers. It is from

these Bulgarian heretics that the English word "bugger" is derived.

Among every major linguistic group of the North American Indians, Gay people were held in awe as shamans. Their practices were one of the first aspects of Indian culture to be wiped out by the invading white Christians.

In the United States in the mid-1950s, Richard Nixon supported an hysterical campaign against "Communist subversives," whom he repeatedly associated with Gayness. At the same time in Communist countries Gay people were being denounced as examples of "bourgeois decadence."

It is an historical fact that Gay people are regularly used as scapegoats in highly industrialized and militarized societies. It is also an historical fact that victorious Christians in Europe conducted wholesale slaughter against the Gay practitioners of heretical religions. Is there a connection between these two facts? Isn't this question itself an *historical* question in the best sense of the word? Doesn't it involve more than anecdotes?

FALLACY THREE: PROFESSIONAL STRAIGHT ACADEMICS ARE A GOOD SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF GAY HISTORY

Open any authoritative history book and you will soon make an astonishing discovery: human beings have apparently had no sexual life! How many textbooks have you read where the author goes into the sex lives of the protagonists? How often does the author trace connections, say, between sexual mores and military and economic systems of life?

If professional academics have treated sex in general in this way, what can we expect them to say about us? What else, except a lot of name calling like "perverts," "deviates," and "psychopaths."

Professional academics are guilty of a monstrous crime against us. They have conspired to keep us ignorant of ourselves. Consider the book by Jeffrey Russell called *Witchcraft in the*



photo by Tom Kennedy

Middle Ages. This is the most comprehensive and authoritative book on medieval witchcraft to appear in the English language. Russell blandly informs the unsuspecting reader that "homosexuality was not a deviation ordinarily alleged against the witches." (p. 219) Note first of all that we are immediately dismissed as a "deviation." What is even more insidious is that *we are told a lie about our history*. For when we examine in close detail his own footnotes, his own sources, even his own words in other places, we find in fact that Gayness and witchcraft were regularly associated. For example, we find in a *footnote* this statement about one of the earliest witch trials: "This, the first explicit allegation of homosexuality, also became a commonplace in later trials." (footnote to p. 95) Because of his own twisted and oppressive values, this straight academic has a blind spot that clouds his ability to deal with Gay history consistently. In this, he is typical of most straight academics.

FALLACY FOUR: GAY ACADEMICS ARE OUR BEST HOPE FOR THE RECOVERY OF GAY HISTORY

Gay academics are members of America's privileged professional classes, and they have been, as a group, one of the last to give open, active support to the Gay liberation movement. The riot at the Stonewall Bar in New York in 1969 was not fought by a battalion of Ph.D.s. The revolution was begun by a handful of drag queens, street people, hustlers, and bar cruisers. They began the revolution without any academic credentials.

As the early Gay movement spread rapidly in the beginning of the 1970s, most of the people who were getting their heads busted, their faces maced, or their ribs broken were the poor, the uneducated, the underemployed, the unemployed, and the unemployable. True, some professional Gay academics dumped money in behind the scenes, and some even came out militantly. But most kept quiet and kept safe. Those few who didn't were subjected to subtle and not-so-subtle pressure from their colleagues, both Gay and straight.

This development should surprise no one. As everybody knows who's been through the graduate school mill, there's only one way to get ahead in the university: compete and conform. Competition with peers and obedience to superiors is the key to success and tenure in the nation's knowledge factories, just as it is in any other industrial enterprise.

Most of the professional Gay academics who now hold important university positions have sold out. That's the only way they could have got where they are. To expect daring or innovative work from such bourgeois careerists is futile. Few of them have even come to terms with their own repressed sexuality, let alone with this embarrassing question: how can real learning be conveyed in a desexualized, bureaucratized hierarchy of domination, competition, and obedience? At most, they seem capable of forming bland Gay Academic

Unions which mimic straight patterns and politely discuss "topics of interest."

Many Gay academics feel *personally threatened* by Gay history. Regardless of what they may do in bed, they have been assimilated into a straight lifestyle. For such people, it's a very uncomfortable feeling to be faced with the idea of separate identifiable Gay cultural traditions in the past. And it's most unnerving to realize that the suppression of these traditions has been abetted by the very university system that feeds them and gives them their middle class privileges and values.

The university—like the church, the state, and the factory—is part of the problem and not part of the solution.

FALLACY FIVE: GAY HISTORY IS UNRELATED TO THE HISTORY OF OTHER OPPRESSED GROUPS

The ancient Celts were a tribal society that held both women and Gay people in high esteem. They were conquered by the Roman state, the same Roman state that had outlawed homosexuality as early as 169 B.C., and that greatly degraded women. Under the Emperor Augustus and his successors, Celtic tribal culture was urbanized and romanized.

The later Roman Empire, highly urbanized and depending for its very existence on military violence, created the conditions for the rise of Christianity, which was finally embraced by the ruling class of warlords and the people this class patronized. The new religion was viciously patriarchal and militaristic, and Gay people in medieval Christian Europe were savagely persecuted.

Under the impetus of Christian imperialism, Europe in the post-medieval period invaded the Americas and Africa, wiped out the local Gay shamans wherever they were encountered, and either decimated the local populations (all of whom were non-white) or reduced them to slavery. From the capital and land accumulation brought about by this exploitation, the economic foundation was laid for

the rise of modern industrialism.

The industrial system created a new form of human life—one where people were totally alienated from nature, from their own labor, even from their own sexuality. For the first time in human history, whole societies of people came into existence whose individual members no longer knew how to grow their own food, build their own shelters, make their own medicines, communicate with animals and nature, or satisfy their own sexual needs. Instead they became dependent on great bureaucratic institutions for satisfying their most intimate and personal needs. Food was from supermarkets, clothes from shopping centers, culture from television, education from universities. The purpose of sex was limited to procreation (producing new workers, consumers, and soldiers) and was viewed as legitimate only in the confines of the monogamous heterosexual family. Most of the population was reduced to the level of wage slaves who spent forty hours a week or more at idiotic, exploitative jobs. Thus was created the one-dimensional person—a sad parody of what once had been the human type.

The astounding loss of self in modern industrial society hangs upon the transition from Christianity to industrialism, which in turn hangs upon the emergence of the Roman patriarchy. The entire history of the West has been the spectacle of increasing patriarchal power culminating in the new industrial state. The victims of the emergence have everywhere been women, Gay people, nature people, non-white people, country dwellers, the poor, and the blessed plants and beasts of nature.



Anger Dialectic

Micael Tapia

I.
I will not allow you
to scatter my anger
with words of class
(its effect on man and the holding of
hands)
when it is those same hands
that beat me

My blood has run out
I am left without vein
I am left without pulse

You call me cold
"Man Hater"
will I choose
that
dead-end
of trust?
I am not so privileged

II.
I don't want your understanding
too many faggots
continue to burn
with the torch of masculine privilege

I don't want your workshop guilt
guilt has scorched
the best of me
for not being straight
for not being white
for not being
"The Man"

I am not blind rage
My heart is keen
with knowing
I am Latino faggot
Listen
then you will be heard . . .

Micael Tapia: born in Los Angeles, currently lives in the Mission District of San Francisco. He is involved in the Viva Inez Defense Committee, the Gay Latino Alliance (GALA), and is involved in cultural work using poetry to reach the people. He was involved in gay struggles but is now involved primarily in anti-imperialist struggles for the emancipation of all people throughout the world.

Cinderella

Aaron Shurin

Last ditch
of hope, plain girls
afame with wishes. The ballroom
is incandescent.
Straining for glory
each one, and only
one can. only one.

Against such odds
a woman buckles, she can no longer
hold the lie true to herself, runs
screaming
a slipper of tears scattered behind.

The Prince must have more.
Inquisition
storms the land.
Each must pit her pain
against this image of crystallized
sorrow

The oldest sister in desperation
cuts off her heel
but the shoe won't stay on
for all the blood.
The second sister cuts off a toe
but her heel's too big.
Cinderella, toying with madness
slips right in, fits
for the moment.
No more sweeping ashes?
She is taken away, the toe and heel
accepted as medals
for the herald's treasure box.

Her two sisters
lie mutilated in bed
sucking the blood orange of the moon.
Cinderella
dances. Her satin gown
gets stiff from sweat
and itchy.

How charming
is this man?
Where, she wonders
where are my sisters?

Aaron Shurin is a poet, lives in San Francisco practicing Radical Hocus-Pocus. His first book, *The Night Sun*, will be published in October by Gay Sunshine Press.



Three little cheers for
the white anglo-saxon
apple pie eating all
American male!
etching by Tom Till

Apple Pie As A Hetero Lie

Tom Kennedy

We are waking
(can't you hear it?)
We are coming alive
we are coming out and now
we have come to know
that there is nothing Amerikan
to celebrate.
There's no such thing
as a red-white-and-blue Queer.
Our integrity demands
that we show some crimson disrespect
Cynicism certainly flows
in all our veins.

We are gathered this year
to reveal two hundred years
of colonialism old and new.
It's time to awaken to the invasion
in our lives.
We are occupied!
There is only the myth of freedom.
This is the year to realize
that we are all victims
of heterosexual imperialism.
This is the year to rattle our chains.
This is the year to awaken.

Our minds are not gay minds
our souls are not gay souls
our sex is tainted by their values
our love, our very love
is too often ruined by the complexities of our oppression.
Yes, there is an unpaid debt
a surfaced contradiction
that awaits its moment.

Our culture was erased with charges of heresy
yet we have pieced our past together enough to know
that we have been crucified witches and faggot
magicians
burned at the stake for being who we are that we have
been
artists granted only half recognition that we have been
exiled to fear and alienation that we have been
brothers and sisters silenced by the Nazi death machine
that we have been dedicated revolutionaries purged
from communism
while Stalin raped mother Russia that we have been
scapegoats for McCarthy that we have been
discounted in China denied in Cuba slaughtered in
Chile
and hunted like game on the streets of Amerika.
There is the rumbling of an unpaid debt.

Go celebrate *your* lies
while we mourn our truths
and testify to 200 years
of unspoken love in frontier towns
of suffering a lifetime in marriages that never fit
of prisons that housed us as criminals for loving
of lobotomies, electric shock and aversion therapy
of your mother's best kept secret
of fear on the job
of living life as a lie
of straight standards throat rammed down
of our life force crippled
of straight white men to intimidate
of humiliation
of degradation
of alienation
of loneliness
of the Amerikan Dream as a nightmare.

Happy birthday Amerika—
I hope it is your last.
Gather your strength gay people
gather to prepare
gather with all oppressed peoples
to envision and demand
the overthrow.
We are kept in our place
like too many others.
Two hundred years
and too many slaves
and too many behind us
to dare stop now.

Tom Kennedy—I dream of barbequed capital-
ists, of joining the People's Liberation Army and
of finding more time to write and dance.

Root Street

Tim Corbett

I want to share a number of feelings and ideas around the issue of class and how it has been ignored by the Gay Liberation movement. Though I feel I have an understanding of class oppression, mostly through personal experiences with it, this article is not intended to be a theoretical class analysis of the gay movement. A lot more research and study is necessary for such a task. I speak rather from my own experiences which is that of a working class white gay man.

CLASS AND HOW IT OPERATES

To avoid confusion and to be as clear as possible, I want to give a working definition of what I mean by *class* and how I have used the word in this article. I'm not using the word in the limited sense in which Marxist-Leninist intellectuals often do. Class involves not only a person's economic position but a whole set of feelings, attitudes, behavior, and privileges.

Class involves your basic assumptions about life, your experiences (determined by your class) validate those assumptions, how you are taught to behave, what you expect from yourself and from others, how you understand problems and solve them, how you think, feel and act.(1)

But your economic position does play a crucial role.

The conditioning that comes from financial security and the lack of financial security are radically different. In a society based on materialism, your worth is determined by where you are on the economic ladder.

Tim Corbett—I've done a lot of work in gay service projects and other kinds of gay organizing. Currently I'm getting into writing—reflecting on the movement, thinking about my own life, and finding my roots.

As gay men, we must understand how class operated in our lives and in our movement. Part of my own understanding of class has been helped along by lesbian feminists struggling with class issues in the women's movement. By looking at some of the ways class has operated in the gay men's movement I hope that we can resolve class differences and conflicts that at this point hinder us from effectively working together.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

I want to talk about my own upbringing and the effect that it's had on me. I was raised in an Irish-Catholic working class family in Chicago. I have two brothers and one sister and I am the oldest. Dad was a mailman all his life until he got sick and was forced to retire five years ago—he drank and smoked too much. Mom then had to go to work as a clerk-typist in a bank. Dad's income was fairly constant (except when he was so drunk he couldn't go to work) and until he retired Mom never had a paying job to keep us going. Even though we never had a lot of money there was always enough to eat and we always had decent clothes. But Dad was a chronic alcoholic and he was always worrying Mom and us kids. I felt very scared and insecure growing up. I would compare my family with others that seemed happier and more loving and wished that everything would get better. It never did.

I went to school in a Catholic seminary from age 15 to 22, studying to be a priest. My family was proud of me. Looking back on it I knew this was to be my way out of the working class. Many Irish working class Catholics push their kids to be nuns and priests not just to assure a place in heaven but to assure that at least one of their kids makes it into the middle class.

At school I didn't measure up to the standards that were set by the middle class kids. My family didn't have two cars, a suburban town-

house, or swanky cocktail parties. My clothes weren't as expensive as theirs. I didn't talk as well as they did.

The kids at school came from a variety of class backgrounds. I made it a point to learn who was above me and who was below me—to know where I "fit in." But the problem was that I didn't seem to fit in anywhere. I wanted to be like the middle class kids above me whom I saw as better than me. I looked upon some of the working class kids below me as stupid and I felt secure that at least I was better than they were.

At college I was on my way to success. I majored in English and minored in philosophy. Needless to say, I learned to read, speak, write, and talk a foreign tongue—middle class talk and jargon. I never became comfortable with it. I still couldn't talk as well as the middle class students, even though I tried. But it felt strange talking my slick college talk with neighborhood pals. They began to look up to me in a way that felt uncomfortable. I wasn't one of them anymore.

Following college I quit the seminary. I then got into the movement, thinking this would be a liberating thing for me. I mean at least here I'd be more comfortable. I was surprised when it turned out to be the same trip all over again. I would sit through meetings listening to articulate radicals talk about class struggle as though working class people were mechanical robots invented by Marx and Lenin. They either idealized the struggles and hard life of working class people with a romanticism that was insulting or pitied the "ignorant fools." As soon as the arrogant college kids let them know they were just pawns of capitalism the workers would lead us all in the revolution. Having only these stereotypes to work from reinforces the ways that middle class radicals have of looking down on us. They never stopped to examine their prejudices. They knew they were better than us.

Many radicals can't understand working class oppression because they have never looked at their own middle class backgrounds and examined the privileges they get from being middle class, how their lives were different from ours. "Even in the various political movements they (the radicals) may recognize class intellectually but they don't understand how their personal behavior, shot through with middle class assumptions and ideas, is destructive to those of us from the working class." (3) But when the political merges with the personal, struggle goes on and we change. Unfortunately too many radicals

haven't gotten this simple message through their heads yet. Revolution is both an internal as well as external process.

Luckily I didn't waste too much time struggling with Marxist-Leninist intellectuals. I came out and joined the Gay Liberation Front in 1970 and wasn't surprised to find that it was a classist movement too. I want to spend the rest of this article dealing with the gay movement and its classism, how it operates presently and how it has been destructive.

photo by Efren Ramirez



CLASS AND THE GAY MOVEMENT

The gay movement has been mainly composed of white middle class men. While lesbians have challenged its sexism and third world people have criticized its racism, the classism of the movement has usually been ignored. Many middle class men have brought with them to the movement a whole set of attitudes, behavior, and lifestyles based on privileges their upbringing and conditioning and relative economic security have given them. Working class people do not have these class privileges. And while middle class men have renounced many of these privileges in rhetoric and in lifestyle, they have clung to attitudes and behavior that is foreign and oppressive to working class people.

DOWNWARD AND UPWARD MOBILITY A fine example of what I'm talking about is the downwardly-mobile lifestyle that is so popular these days. By downward mobility I mean an "alternative" lifestyle of subsistence living on marginal incomes such as unemployment, welfare, food stamps, and menial jobs and the decorations that go with it like dope, patched jeans, work shirts, "the funky look," flea market bargains, etc. Its followers reject material possessions and the lifestyle of their parents. Since material possessions are seen as part of the shallow lives they have been raised in and are now rejecting they are things to be despised. Downwardly mobile values are being free and unhassled in making your own decisions, being in touch with your feelings and living the way you want to (usually defined as the further away from mainstream American the better).

For some middle class men this can be a very important step. For the first time they are realizing that material benefits don't bring happiness. But it doesn't stop there. Rather it gets pushed as the road to revolution. These privileges middle class men are rejecting are privileges many working class people never had and can't get. I mean things like better schools and

better jobs, nice possessions and fancy homes. They have rejected middle class values because these values have fucked their heads up. But what they can't get through their heads is that for us it didn't work the same way. A friend of mine once told me he would never work for another capitalist pig again. That's really great. For many of us getting any type of work was difficult enough. What so many middle class men don't seem to realize is that it's a class privilege to be able to afford to live this lifestyle. Instead of rejecting these privileges they could be sharing them with some of us who've never had them and can't get them. Also what they seem to ignore is that when they get tired of living in poverty they can go back to better jobs, nice possessions, and money from their parents. For working class men to become downwardly mobile is suicide. Because for us there's no going back to better jobs and well-to-do parents. For us there's only more of the same: crummy jobs and lousy wages.

What I'm saying is that downward mobility is not the way to reject class privilege. It only reinforces it by substituting one oppressive lifestyle for another. And here again middle class men make the rules and expect us to follow them.

On the other hand, some of us from the working class have attained some middle class status and privileges. We've gone to college, received a degree, educated ourselves, learned a trade or other marketable skill. We are what's often called upwardly mobile. By this I mean we have secured, often through overcoming many obstacles, privileges that have allowed us to escape some of the drudgery and oppression of working class life. We've had more opportunities to move up the class ladder than most of our class. However, this in no way negates our working class backgrounds. We've had to work hard to secure a few privileges most working class people can't get that most middle class people take for granted since they haven't had to work for them. And yet middle class people will try and tell us that since we

have a degree or a good paying job that we are no longer working class; that somehow because we've paid our dues this in some way negates the rest of our lives. In the same way they feel that if they work in a factory or as a clerk they are just as working class as we are.

Some of us can *pass* as middle class and do in our everyday lives. We have knuckled under the brainwash of families, schools, jobs, and the media who've been telling us all of our lives that middle class people were better. Now we believe it. Some of us have completely sold out to middle class society because we saw it as the only way of survival and often because of the real privileges and comforts it gave us. We often take the position that if we did it, others can too.

But others have not sold out. We have used our skills to benefit those who don't have them. We haven't forgotten our pasts. We remain working class in our values and outlook. Sometimes middle class people don't know how to deal with us since we've been to school and have spent a lot of time learning to talk like them. We dispel their myths of us as dumb and inarticulate. In fact, many of them don't believe we're *really* working class because we don't fit their preconceived images.

LANGUAGE AND RHETORIC AS MEANS OF CONTROL

The gay movement has not taken seriously the needs of working class gays. Too often the middle-class "leaders" assume that issues that are important to them are important to everyone, not recognizing that working class people have different priorities. For example, organizing around the employment rights of gay teachers or for a gay studies program on the college level are certainly progressive issues but too often they are viewed as more important than, say, the legal rights of transvestite prostitutes—many of whom are working class.

Having been trained well to use language and rhetoric to get their way,

middle class men often use it to confuse an issue or to keep contradictions within an issue from surfacing. In meetings it's often not so much what is said that is paid attention to but how well the speaker gets it across. For those of us who don't possess sophisticated verbal skills what we say is often ignored. This is not to say that we don't get our points across. It's just that we don't have to use long winded phrases to do it.

Often what we say is so direct or on such a gut level that middle class men can't handle their feelings about it. Language spaces them away from their feelings and safely lets them control the flow of events so they don't have to change. We often don't understand what more educated men are saying because some words are confusing to us. We feel too stupid and intimidated to ask people to explain what they mean. In all the words and phrases, the real issues get lost. The use of language we don't understand reinforces class position and ignores class differences.

THE NEED FOR WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP

We have felt alienated in the movement because we have no unity. Some of us having more privilege than others have kept us divided. Some of us "pass" and those who can't—or refuse to—have blamed ourselves for our isolation and not the class society which causes it. We bought the middle class line that our movement is above classes, that class differences really don't exist or are not important.

Most working class gay men don't get into the movement. This is not surprising. A movement so middle-class identified doesn't turn on working class gays. They might agree with certain goals of a gay organization and identify with the struggle but that's about it. Joining groups is not for them. Many are too busy just surviving and can't afford time and energy for meetings. For those living in the mainstream of working class America, "coming out" is unthinkable. The

risks are too great—loss of jobs and rejection by family and friends. Many working class gays probably have tried getting into the movement but it just didn't feel right. Working class leadership must emerge in the movement if our needs are to be taken seriously. We're not kidding ourselves into believing that middle class men will change without being pushed. We're not going to be polite and ask for "space" in their movement. The movement is ours just as much as it is theirs. The more we've connected with each other the more solidarity we feel. We're getting clearer about how we must demand the movement to change and where it must go. Those of us who haven't kept our mouths shut and have made criticisms have given confidence to others to do the same. Recently we've seen that united we can make a difference.

We have developed many skills that middle class people don't have through our struggles for economic survival. We're resourceful and skilled at surviving. Instead of sitting around talking an issue to pieces we're more concerned with getting something done. Nothing came to us handed on a silver platter. We had to work for it. So we're not content with just theorizing about oppression. We've got more at stake because we're feeling the crunch and must do something about it. For us making a revolution is serious business. We know we have more to gain and less to lose by fighting our enemies. We often see more clearly the need to unite with other oppressed peoples for our survival. And just as clearly we are realizing that we must put forth our demands in a movement that can't ignore us anymore.

We're demanding that middle class men change their attitudes, behavior, and lifestyles when they oppress us. Middle class men will tell us, "OK, I know I'm oppressive; tell me when I oppress you and I'll not do it." This puts all the responsibility on the working class men. Middle class men have to fight class behavior in themselves and in others and begin to see the fight as their fight too. Or they might say,

"I'm not really middle class because my parents worked twelve hours a day in the family store. I'm really like you." This excuse does nothing but gloss over real differences between us and stops attempts to listen to criticism. To retreat in guilt-ridden paranoia is another excuse as is the lip-service middle class men are especially skilled at. They can talk a great line but refuse to do anything. But the most common resistance is to take criticism personally and not politically. "So and so just doesn't like me I've tried being nice but it just doesn't work." I don't want middle class men to be nice and phony with me. I want them to struggle and to change. It's not a matter of not liking you. I just won't tolerate your condescending behavior anymore.

What all of us must do is examine where we fit in on the social/economic scale, how it affected us, what we thought of people below us, above us; how can we start in concrete ways to change our behavior? It's certainly going to take all of us working together if we are ever going to make a revolution. I want to continue to work with middle class brothers. But I won't sit on the sidelines anymore. I can't take that risk. I also don't have all the answers. I have dozens of questions about how we can resolve our differences. But I know for sure that we can't sit around waiting anymore.

(1) Rita Mae Brown, "The Last Straw," *Class and Feminism*, Diana Press (12 W. 25th St., Baltimore, MD. 21218, \$2.25), 1974, p. 15.

(2) Nancy Myron, "Class Beginnings," *Class and Feminism*, p. 37.

(3) Rita Mae Brown, "The Last Straw," *Class and Feminism*, p. 15. The book *Class and Feminism* was very helpful to me in working through my own feelings and ideas about class. It was an influential resource for many of the ideas expressed in the article. I would recommend it to those who'd like to explore their own feelings about class and how it works.

The Red Detachment of Faggots

Tom Kennedy

Let it be our anger
that paves our way to freedom
we have been unheard for centuries
but now our time has come.
we are faggots—
your poets whose genius you extol
yet whose identity you deny
we are the gracious of the male species
smooth in form and manner
and now executing gracious militancy

You have denied us for too long
and we have denied ourselves doubly
but our day has finally dawned
and we are blatant
ready to threaten your lies.
in costume

we confront you
in male love
you are scorned
for being unable to release yourselves
from your own traps—
we have no sympathy, not yet

The price you will pay for your deeds
no dollars can buy off
for you will suffer the sentence
of alienation.
you are left with yourselves
and we with our anger and pride.

And for a while we will mock you
as we rest cuddled in our lovers' arms
for your crimes are unforgivable

Your throne is collapsing
and all around you
dance women, children and faggots



photo by Efren Ramirez



photo by Efren Ramirez

Gay Freedom Day

San Francisco, 1976



photo by Daniel Arcos



photo by Daniel Arcos



photo by Efren Ramirez



photo by Daniel Arcos

A Closer Look At Socialist Feminism

Tom Kennedy

Before I proceed with this article I should give some background on where I am coming from politically. The essence of my political identity has always been closest to both feminism and anti-imperialism starting back with the anti-war movement. Working most directly in the gay men's liberation movement, many of my understandings were exact reflections or adaptations of feminist and lesbian feminist theory. Working briefly in the New American Movement (NAM) in the summer and early fall of 1975 was where I first had direct contact with the politics of socialist feminism. (Much of the early theory of socialist feminism came from women in NAM.) Not clearly understanding the role of class, racism and imperialism to revolutionary struggle made feminism and an abstract, theoretical understanding of socialism seem primary and complete. When I left NAM for a complex number of reasons (essentially class differences) I identified politically as a socialist feminist and began to take more seriously issues of imperialism and building a new communist party. Most recently I have gone deeper into those areas as well as come to uncover and understand my own relatively privileged yet nonetheless material working class background. This understanding has given me deeper political insights into the political perspective of socialist feminism which up until more recently I so firmly and unquestioningly identified with. In an attempt to synthesize our identity with socialism and feminism, a sizeable number of gay men in the movement have adopted socialist feminism. Many, like myself, have done so without taking the political responsibility to completely understand its per-

spectives and theory as well as its practice which tests its theory. This article is an attempt to take that responsibility and provoke discussion which will develop personal and political clarity and unity.

The second half of this article, the critique, is more recent than the first half. A lot of its perspectives and conclusions came from working to build the July 4th Coalition demonstrations, working with lesbians from the Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union in the Gay sector of the Coalition, and from the rising third world and working class consciousness and participation in the gay men's liberation movement here in the Bay Area. From those experiences I met many people, who, through their lives and political work, have taught me a lot about racism and classism in terms of the political dominance exerted by white and middle class people in the left.

Socialist feminism grew out of divisions between radical feminists around the issues of who or what was the primary enemy of women. One side said men; the other said capitalism. In time political ideologies developed out of each perspective—an anti-capitalist outlook for some women, a separatist outlook for others and reformism (working solely for legislative reforms) for the rest. Class divisions in the women's movement and the rise of anti-imperialist politics in the left pushed the anti-capitalist feminists toward adopting a socialist perspective. These various political divisions among women in the feminist movement marked an end to the myth of all women as political allies as originally put forth in the slogan "Sisterhood is powerful."

The gay men's movement has mirrored the same divisions in its own way. As in the women's movement, reformism is a major political approach for many gay men, many of whom are white and middle class and who basically accept the system as it stands. There are gay liberationists who see straight people and homophobia as the main enemy. There are effeminists

who view patriarchy and male supremacy as the source of all oppression. Finally, there are pro-socialist and socialist-identified gay men who view imperialism (this present stage of monopoly capitalism) as the source of gay oppression. Most gay men in this area feel that feminist leadership and politics are central to their vision of what socialism is to gay men. It's here at this point where socialist feminism meets the political interests of pro-socialist gay men. There are two main reasons for this. First, by its nature as a feminist ideology socialist feminism questions the role and function of the nuclear family, taking into account the social role of lesbians and gay men in a supportive and affirmative way. Secondly, it challenges the existing socialist and communist tendencies by maintaining that women must be a *leading* force in the revolutionary movement if such a movement is to be actually revolutionary. These two characteristics make socialist feminism an exciting and hopeful alternative to the male dominance of the socialist movement.

My first exposure to socialist feminism was early last year when I first heard mention of the Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union (BOWU), an autonomous socialist feminist organization. Since that time I have had contact with women from Seattle to Boston who identify politically as socialist feminists and who are working to develop and build a socialist feminist movement in this country. This task was boosted last year by the gathering of over 1600 women during the July 4th weekend in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Women from all around the country gathered for the first national Socialist Feminist Conference, giving speeches which attempted to define socialist feminism and its role in the socialist and feminist movements. Drawing upon many of these speeches, the rest of this article will discuss what socialist feminism is, as defined by socialist feminists themselves, and how it relates to us as gay men involved in social change.

THE CHARACTER OF SOCIALIST FEMINISM

Perhaps the best place to start in understanding what socialist feminism is and is not is to look at the principles of unity that were drawn up for the Socialist Feminist Conference. The purpose of these principles was to provide a good focus for the political discussion relevant to socialist feminism at that particular conference. They also served as the beginning of the basis of unity and understanding for the women that gathered together. The following are those four principles:

- 1 We recognize the need for, and support the existence of, the autonomous women's movement throughout the revolutionary process.
- 2 We agree that all oppression, whether based on race, class, sex, or lesbianism, is interrelated and the fights for liberation from oppression must be simultaneous and cooperative.
- 3 We agree that socialist feminism is a strategy for revolution.
- 4 We take our movement seriously; discussions at the conference should be in the spirit of struggle and unity to move socialist feminism forward.

During the conference as well as after, much discussion went to attempting to decipher just exactly what socialist feminism was and was not. Answering this question has been a central issue among socialist-identified feminists in both the feminist and socialist movements. And while many varied issues were discussed at the Ohio conference, many speeches and follow-up analyses focused on defining what this new political perspective is all about and how it differs from the numerous strategies for socialism that already exist. It is from these speeches and analyses that the following five key areas or characteristics of socialist feminism have come. We should keep in mind, however, that socialist feminism is not a static political line or dogma and that these characteristics should not be seen as its limitations or boundaries. These aspects deal with how socialist feminism differs from other socialist tendencies.

It is important not to overlook the fact that socialist feminism shares a common perspective with the other socialist tendencies in that it views all of history and all present international politics as pivoting around one basic contradiction—the antagonistic relationship between the ruling class, the minority of corporate capitalists and government officials and their allies, and the working class, the majority of people whose exploited labor produces the wealth which capitalists rule by. Socialism stands as the political system that views a classless society, based on an equal distribution of wealth, as its goal. With this understanding, let's look deeper into socialist feminism.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Socialist feminism contends that women are central to the revolutionary process and crucial to its success. Understanding the character of socialist feminism is to realize that female socialists and socialist feminists are not

the same thing. While traditional Marxists see the women's movement as another group oppressed by capitalism, socialist feminist thinking acknowledges the critical and primary importance of women in any upcoming revolution. In a speech by Barbara Ehrenreich at the Ohio conference, she spoke to this point by stating, "When I say 'critical importance' I mean not in an auxiliary role, or not as a minority group that needs to be appeased by the revolutionary forces—I mean women *as* a revolutionary force, as a leading force." (*Socialist Revolution*, #26, pg. 88)

THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF AUTONOMY Socialist feminists feel that just as women are central to the revolutionary process, so is the need and the right for autonomy central to socialist feminism. It is important here to clarify the differentiation that socialist feminists make between autonomy and separatism. Separatism is the call for absolute separation of groups, which advances differences that exist



Photo by Kevin Burke

between people (Gay/non-gay, women/men) to the level of absolute enemies. Unlike lesbian separatism, socialist feminism views class differences as the primary conflict and stands critical of, yet allied with, the straight, male dominated left. The Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union spoke to the issue of autonomy by stating, "We are autonomous because we are oppressed as women by capitalism. We have seen in the past years that only a strong women's movement independent of the mixed left can take leadership and make the left move on the questions raised by feminism. Only through autonomy can the struggle against women's oppression be central to our practice."

The existence of autonomous groupings in the left raises crucial issues regarding the form that the left takes on the path of socialist revolution. Many leftists feel that autonomous groupings of class-conscious minority groups only mirror and perpetuate the already-existing divisions that exist under capitalism. This, some feel, holds back the development of a revolutionary movement by impeding the struggle to confront those differences (racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) *within* some type of revolutionary grouping or party. Supporters of autonomy argue that the struggle to confront the ways we are oppressed by each other is invariably at the expense of oppressed minority groups. In mixed socialist groupings, minorities end up using all their political energies to defend their small and hard-earned gains while straight, white, male leftists continue to be the ones with the privilege and self-assurance to indulge in the luxury of discussing organizational strategies, political theory, and other key issues which, on many levels, are the core of political leadership and power.

The Lavender and Red Union, an autonomous gay communist organization in Los Angeles, has addressed the issue of autonomy from a gay perspective.

By autonomy we mean independent

and self-governing; in cooperation with rather than in subordination to the broader revolutionary movement. Separatism sees the contradictions that exist now among the people as complete and absolute while autonomy is a temporary strategy to instigate a higher level of struggle among the people and within the revolutionary movement. Though separatism and autonomy grow out of the material, cultural and ideological domination of the oppressor culture, autonomy is correct and will aid our liberation. We see autonomy not as an end in itself but rather a transitional device. Even today we do not uphold this organizational form as an ideal but only as a historical necessity. The fragmentation of the left is not the responsibility of the Lavender and Red Union, the independent women's movement, etc. but of the revolutionary movement as a whole and most particularly of the dogmatists, the sectarians and revisionists that dominate it.

We do not see ourselves abandoning the struggle to rectify the incorrect positions that have gained hegemony in the left. Rather we see ourselves as having made a strategic retreat. We feel that through the development of an autonomous organization, through building a base in the Gay community, by developing our theory, we have the best possibility of pushing forward the struggle. (*The Lavender & Red Book*, pgs. 53 and 54)

The relationship of autonomy to a mass movement is a central question in building that movement. Related to this is the ambiguous relationship of socialist feminism to the overall left. Specifically, is socialist feminism inside the left but independent, or outside yet allied? This question raises the issues of strategy that all socialists must discuss and solve, socialist feminists included.

THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL While Wilhelm Reich, a German socialist and psychologist, may have been the first to discuss this perspective in the 1930's, its application and practice have never been as extensive as they are now. Much of the credit for this goes to the feminist and gay liberation movements, who were the first to politicize what up until recently had been termed "the personal" and thus the irrelevant to "real"

revolutionary struggle. This very perspective provides the missing link between the abstraction of political theory and our daily lives and experiences.

The following is one socialist feminist's feelings on the importance of this connection. "The personal is political is a crucial perspective because it legitimizes people's experience of alienation and oppression by acknowledging that what people already feel to be important *is* important. It is a starting point from which we can understand day-to-day reality. From here we can go on to understand our experiences differently than when they first occurred to us. By making the connections between our own and other's experiences, we begin to demystify and struggle against the bourgeois ideology that we all have internalized." (*Socialist Revolution*, #26, pg. 96)

This perspective, which has been the basis of the women's and gay movements, is relatively new to socialism. While Marxism speaks to the fact that capitalism permeates our every experience and interaction, it does so in a theoretical way. Socialist feminism takes that theory literally and begins to politicize people by starting with their day-to-day experiences and concerns. While this may seem only practical and logical, its actual application and practice on a large scale is unique within the left.

THE PRIMARY CONTRADICTION FOR WOMEN Socialist feminists feel that their political outlook is necessary because sexism and capitalism form one integrated system. This principle is particularly relevant to the women's movement where a lot of energy has gone into the debate over what the primary contradiction or conflict for women actually is—sex (gender) or class. Socialist feminism maintains that sexism and capitalism complement one another and cannot be separated.

This principle is particularly important in terms of the relationship be-



Photo by Kevin Burke

tween socialist feminism and Marxism. It demands that the Marxist method and analysis be applied to developing an understanding of the realities of women's oppression. Socialist feminism uses Marxist methodology and applies it to whole areas of society that traditional Marxists have not addressed. In the past, socialists generally have been concerned only with that part of life directly organized by capital—production for profit and the activities of the State that maintain capitalism. Sexuality, lesbianism, and raising children—personal life in general—have not been seen as appropriate subjects of socialist analysis. In this way the oppression of women and their revolutionary potential have been ignored or devalued.

REVOLUTION AS A DEVELOPING PROCESS Socialist feminism regards the revolutionary process as an evolutionary and developing process and maintains that any understanding of the revolutionary process must be

adjusted as understandings of oppression broaden. This perspective is perhaps the most encouraging aspect of socialist feminism and, in many ways, reflects an essential tone. It's quite probable that the major reason the strategy of the left has failed in this and other countries is its inability to adapt without compromise to changing conditions. While this is no doubt the ultimate challenge for those committed to making revolutionary change, no other strategy for revolution has adequately adopted this perspective or taken it as seriously as socialist feminism appears to be doing. Speaking to the importance of openness and adaptability, the Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union explains, "The best example of this has been our struggle to develop an understanding of gay oppression as integral to sexism. Most left groups either define homosexuality as a personal but not a political alternative, as something to be ignored, or condemn it as counter-revolutionary. Understanding that two integral

aspects of sexism are the confinement of women to a secondary and private sphere and the myth of woman as the natural complement of man, we see the challenge that lesbianism poses. We have also learned to struggle against the dominant left position that acknowledges sexism without accepting our need for autonomy, both as individuals and in organizations." (*Socialist Revolution*, #26, pg. 97)

In the context of the numerous socialist tendencies that have risen since Marx and Engels first put forth their political perspective, socialist feminism stands boldly as an exceptional political outlook. While women have always played a major role in all revolutionary struggles, their role in pre-revolutionary times has not been as primary. In this respect, socialist feminism is a historic first. As a tendency and a statement in opposition to male dominance in the left, it stands firmly backed by lesbian support. However, as a strategy for revolution it fails to answer questions that it has unfortu-

nately not even raised. It is in these questions that its future lies.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Socialist feminists have put forth socialist feminism as a strategy for revolution. In doing so they have opened themselves up to examination and criticism of their political perspectives and have themselves raised the question, "Is socialist feminism as defined by its theory and practice, a valid strategy for revolution?" In this context, a critical look at the program and assumptions of socialist feminism is necessary to make it a more effective practice, especially since its supporters view it as central to the entire process of making a socialist revolution in this country.

THE HISTORY OF DIVISIONS IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT In discussing the potential and effectiveness of socialist feminism we can't help but briefly examine the history of the movement which it grew out of. From the earliest history of the women's movement, white middle class women have both dominated the movement and sold out the most oppressed of women—third world and working class women. This division reflects the difference in perspectives between women from these two sectors of society. For middle class white women the movement meant political equality in a society they basically accepted. For third world and working class women the fight was one for survival. The 1850s saw this type of division reflected in the composition of the

abolition movement and the women's movement. Most active Black women worked for abolition of slavery rather than in the women's rights struggle because for them it was a question of survival, not rights. Those Black women who did work in the women's movement did so because they wanted the right to speak at anti-slavery meetings and they desired their full share of political rights to further their fight against slavery. While there was an alliance between the women's movement and the abolition movement it was not based on any political unity or understanding of the common enemy shared by both. In fact, in the women's movement there was a tendency to equate women's oppression with that of Black slavery, which reflects the low level of understanding

Photo by Kevin Burke



around racial oppression that existed then. This antagonism around race and class repeated itself continually throughout the history of the women's movement. Regarding the Fifteenth Amendment, which outlawed racial discrimination at the polls, white feminists exposed their racism in their bitterness at their failure to get sexual discrimination added to the amendment. Elizabeth Stanton, one of the leading feminists of the day, summed up the sentiment of many white feminists at that time when she stated

... are you willing to have the colored man enfranchised before the women; I say no. I would not trust him with my rights. Degraded, oppressed himself, he would be more despotic with the governing power than ever our Saxon rulers are. ... If women are still to be represented by men, then I say let only the highest type of manhood stand at the helm of State. (*Seize The Time, "History of the Early Women's Movement,"* pg. 9)

While there was a tendency among the feminists to support Black struggles, their radical positions were increasingly attacked, forcing them to ally with the middle class tendency that pushed only for women's suffrage. Middle class reformists used their power in labor struggles to dominate and sell out working class women. In the Women's Trade Union League, a coalition of house workers and working women that existed from 1903 through the late 1930s, the division of class interests and perspectives eventually split and dissolved the League. Working class women pushed for their need to form unions to protect them from harassment from their bosses. Middle class women pushed for legislative reforms that would adjust the minor flaws in what they saw as a basically good system. The reformists encouraged rich sympathizers to join the League, people whose class power and privilege allowed them to take over the League and shape its politics.

These patterns of division have been carried right into today's women's movement. Again, most of the power and leadership rests securely in the

hands of white, middle class women. It is from this movement and its history that most socialist feminists have come. While allying themselves verbally with third world and white working class women in their struggles, the middle class composition of their movement reflects one of its major contradictions. As a result of this composition, many of the issues raised by socialist feminists fail to speak to the needs of third world women.

FEMINISM AND THIRD WORLD WOMEN The racism of the women's movement is rarely discussed openly; nor are the differences between the political outlooks of third world women and white women discussed often. Speaking to this, one third world woman explains the central reason that third world women do not work in the women's movement:

Activist sisters understand that in order to improve the lives of third world women as women, it is essential to end their oppression as third world people. So much of the sexual and class oppression suffered by third world women is integrated with racial oppression. (*Third World Women, Seize The Time*)

One good example of how third world women's struggles differ from the women's movement's demands is seen around the issue of abortion on demand. This demand is put forth as an important right for women to control their own, individual bodies. But for third world women, a greater threat to that principle is the reality of forced sterilization. Women who are forcibly sterilized don't have the freedom to decide if they want children ever again. Furthermore, in this imperialist society, forced sterilization is more than a violation of a woman's individual rights. It is an attack and a violation on her whole people.

In this context a third world woman may ask, "What does abortion on demand mean when the children I have are taken from me by the courts, when they are murdered in a thousand ways by this racist, dog-eat-dog society?" Third world women have fought for the liberation of women. Most often our

struggles have been in the context of enabling us to contribute even more to the liberation of our entire people, to the liberation of working people, to the ultimate end of all forms of hierarchy and oppression. (*Third World Women, Seize The Time*)

In this critical area of understanding the realities of third world women, socialist feminism has not offered much as a strategy for revolution for those women. Socialist feminists have failed to understand that for third world women, their national oppression is more important than their oppression as women. For this reason feminist organizations have little to offer. The ability and desire to organize autonomously, as women independent of the left, does not correspond to the needs of third world women politically and would serve to divide them from third world men. Despite the sexism of third world men, third world women are allied more to third world men sharing the deeper oppression they feel as non-white people, than they are with good-intentioned white feminists. The failure of socialist feminism to recognize this reality reflects their lack of understanding of the intensity of national oppression that third world people experience. While recognizing that women have a vast potential to lead a socialist revolution, socialist feminism fails to recognize that third world women will be the leading force for liberation among women.

CONTRADICTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS While the position of the importance of an autonomous socialist feminist presence is a weakness of socialist feminism in relation to national oppression, it also serves as a strength in the context of fighting male supremacy and heterosexism within the socialist movement. Having an autonomous base to work from keeps issues of sexism and heterosexism from being avoided, especially in coalition work. It also enables women to become stronger through mutual support, to develop a women's analysis and theory on the issues that arise from oppression under capitalism and fosters the growth of women's culture

and identity. For white women in the left, it offers a base from which criticism around sexism can be raised. With lesbian leadership and a commitment among socialist feminists to deal with anti-gayness, the issues of gay oppression are viewed as integral to the oppression of all women. In these ways, socialist feminism advances the role of lesbians and non-gay women in the left.

In terms of organizational and individual leadership, socialist feminism plays a dual role. By having an all women's organization committed to the principles of socialism and feminism women can discuss and share ideas in an atmosphere free from the intimidation of leftist male heavies. This has certainly aided in the political development of many women and has encouraged women to take leadership both within socialist feminist unions and outside of them. With the urgent need for strong women's leadership facing the left, this is a major contribution. Organizationally, socialist feminists have put forth the strategy of organizing mass socialist feminist organizations across the country. In this period when there is not yet a mass base of socialists among working class people, this form of organization should be questioned. It is at this junction between the racial and class character of socialist feminism and its proposed strategy where serious errors and conclusions have been made. These errors have come from incorrectly identifying which stage of the revolutionary process we are in, in not identifying third world women as having the greatest revolutionary potential in leading socialist feminism, in not recognizing the central role of national oppression to third world women, and in not being self-critical in these errors.

In summary, socialist feminism has made many significant contributions both to women and to the white left. Specifically, it has struggled to provide a class analysis of women's oppression, involved many women in developing theory and analysis, provided an alternative to the reform-

oriented middle class feminist movement, provided an organizational structure for socialist feminists, encouraged the development of women's leadership in the left, and challenged a male-dominated left around issues of sexism and heterosexism. Its weaknesses include failing to organize large numbers of white working class women, failing to meet or understand the political needs of third world women, and failing to identify and correct political errors. One Bay Area women's collective that spent three months critically studying the women's movement as it stands today has concluded the following:

The women's movement has made far reaching changes in the lives of all women. Its challenge to male supremacy has had a sharp impact on bourgeois society, and on the left. It has radicalized and transformed the lives of thousands of women, many of whom are now committed to organizing for the liberation of all women. However, this movement has reached a turning point in its development. Organizationally it does not seem to be growing, and it is not any closer to organizing working class women. It is important for women to organize around women's demands as anti-imperialist and class demands as well.

Even though the women's movement has consisted largely of women from petit-bourgeois backgrounds, the recognition of the systematic oppression of women under capitalism has led many women to reject that system. In doing so, these women have also rejected the class position of the petit bourgeoisie. The women's movement has provided a vehicle for many women to develop a more proletarian class outlook.

At this point it is essential that we clarify the weaknesses which have led to our inability to base our movement among the masses of working class women. We need to develop a clear understanding of the questions before us in order to develop strategy and organization. ("The Women's Movement Today," *Seize The Time*, April 1976)

SOCIALIST FEMINISM AND THE DIRECTION OF GAY LIBERATION

There is a corresponding tendency among mostly-white politically active gay men that reflects many of the basic

perspectives of socialist feminism. Many of the men who identify with this outlook support feminism and generally support socialism in principle, and tend to be somewhat hostile toward the organized left because of its male dominance. A lot of this support for socialist feminism appears to be naive and more often than not uncritically accepting. Since feminism is right on and socialism is right on it follows to them that socialist feminism is really right on. Tied in deeply with such a blanket acceptance of women-defined politics is a dangerous subservience to any political outlook coming from women. Following the leadership of women is an important dimension of revolutionary struggle; blind and uncritical acceptance of women's theory, strategy, and leadership is not only irresponsible politically, but will ultimately hold back revolutionary development by postponing necessary political debate and discussion. This consideration applies to every area of our support work of the women's movement. If we believe that women's victories are our victories we must also accept that women's political errors are also ours.

Reflecting both its racial and class composition, the gay men's movement like the women's movement, has leaned heavily toward political reforms. Its program has benefited middle class white gay men the most, many times at the expense of third world and working class gay brothers. Political organizations like Gay Activists Alliance and Bay Area Gay Liberation continue primarily to serve the interests of white, middle class men, sometimes giving strong verbal support to third world struggles but maintaining organizational power and leadership among white men, be they liberals or socialists. Within the growing socialist, pro-feminist tendency among gay men lies many of the same racist and classist political assumptions and errors that exist amidst the socialist feminist tendency in the white women's movement.

Third world people are the leading revolutionary force in the world today.



photo by Efren Ramirez

Internationally, third world countries and peoples are rising to attack United States imperialism on all fronts in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. In the United States itself, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicanos, and Native Americans are all involved in militant struggles and, at times, open warfare. Unless gay men who identify as socialists or anti-imperialists come to recognize the leading role of third world struggles through study, discussion, and practice, the gay men's liberation movement will offer little real support to revolutionary struggle and development. Unless we acknowledge the importance of third world and working class leadership in the gay liberation movement and act concretely on that acknowledgement, the ideas and perspectives of gay liberation will remain isolated among middle-class gay men and lesbians and will never reach deep into society. Ultimately this will involve the somewhat painful experience of exposing to ourselves and to each other our ra-

cism as well as our classism. Middle class privilege and white chauvinism among gay men in the movement clearly explain why the bulk of the gay liberation movement is ambiguous and at times hostile toward building class consciousness and a socialist movement. Many of the criticisms directed toward socialism and socialist countries around anti-gayness come not from a sincere commitment to struggle with those attitudes in a spirit of developing more unity, but rather come from a hostile political perspective that is more allied with the bourgeoisie than with any working class attempt to build a revolution that will change the entire system itself. There exists an urgent need for working class gays, third world gays, and their allies to put forth an analysis of the relationship of gay struggles to anti-imperialism and socialist revolution. An anti-imperialist movement is developing in this country. Throughout the world, revolution and national independence are the major trend. Inside this coun-

try, in the belly of the monster of imperialism, both the major segments of the Black liberation movement and the Native American movement are focusing their strategy for liberation on national sovereignty, meaning the possible emergence of both an Indian nation and a Black nation which would stand autonomous and independent of the American government. Among white workers and third world people, police repression, wage and welfare cutbacks, and attacks on unions and the right to strike are furthering dissent. Our role as gay people in any upcoming revolutionary movement will depend entirely on liberating the gay liberation movement, seizing power from the middle class white men who dominate it, and putting that power in the hands of working class and third-world gays who have a real stake in building a people's movement. Our role will also depend on ending the isolation of gay struggles from third world struggles, labor struggles, community struggles, and

struggles of the unemployed and of those on welfare. It is imperative to remember that for the majority of the estimated twenty million lesbians and gay men in this country, gay oppression is only one of the oppressions experienced in this society and it is not, necessarily, the central oppression.

In this period of a diffused and disunited left it is somewhat difficult to be as accurate and informed on the various issues and tendencies that exist within the left; isolation greatly hampers communication and dialogue. In this context it is possible that there are presently-existing socialist feminist organizations elsewhere in the country that are taking the interests and concerns of Third World and working class white women more seriously than the most visible socialist feminist organizations are. Ideally, it would have been best if this article had been basically written by a working class woman who is in the core of the movement. But since building political solidarity with the faggot movement isn't a priority of socialist feminists, I don't feel that this attempt to clarify and discuss the program and theory of socialist feminism is either sexist or presumptuous. These kinds of claims by gay men reflect the very paranoid political passivity which is dangerous and damaging to any movement. To self-righteously tell women how and where to organize is one thing; to give critical support to their political outlook is another, especially if it is done in a friendly way among those who identify as socialists, be they men or women.

While this article has mostly discussed central aspects of socialist feminism as a revolutionary theory for liberation, its major underlying focus is on the relative relationship between gay oppression, the predominantly white gay men's movement, and national and international class struggle. The conclusion that I have drawn, that Third World people are the leading force of revolutionary struggle both here and throughout the world, will probably be somewhat threatening to white gay activists whose political understandings often come most from

their oppression as gay people. In denying the relative privileges that exist among all oppressed people, privileged whites will often ask why they should organize around someone else's oppression before their own, not seeing that they can do both simultaneously. The core of this response comes from our collective oppression which pits us all against one another for crumbs of freedom. In this context, one of the most important lessons that gay white activists need to understand is how the oppression of others *directly and personally* affects us. Basically we need to acknowledge who benefits the least from imperialist oppression and who benefits somewhat more from it. We also need to understand who holds the greatest revolutionary potential and who, once effectively organized, will lead the fight that will destroy our common enemy. Hopefully this article has advanced that understanding and will encourage discussion among gay leftists and within future issues of *Magnus*.

Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union Principles of Unity, 1975, 2022 Blake Street, Berkeley, CA 94705, \$.50.

Eugene Women's Union Principles of Unity, 1975, P.O. Box 10381, Eugene, Oregon 97401.

Lavender and Red Book, A Gay Liberationist/Socialist Anthology, April 1976, The Lavender and Red Union, 6844 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028, \$2.50.

Seize the Time, Vol. 2, No. 4, April 1976, P.O. Box 4064, Mountain View, CA 94040, \$.50.

Socialist Feminism: A Strategy For the Women's Movement, 1972, Hyde Park Chapter Chicago Women's Liberation Union, 819 W. George, Chicago, Illinois 60657, \$.50.

Socialist Revolution, "The National Conference On Socialist Feminism" (four articles) #26, 396 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, \$2.00.

* * * * *

The average chicken in the U.S. travels 1200 miles to market—especially if he's from Iowa.

An Open Poem To The Left

Tom Kennedy

Choreographers take notice!
this one just has to be
different
no more words
that aren't enough
no more frenzy
it must be pleasurable
to be lasting.

in this house we have rhetoric
and in this house we have religion
the houses must pass
there is no doubt

and here we have spirited revolution
and here we have revolutionary
spiritualism
it is time to move past old ways
that have failed the hearts of the
people.

in the release of the woman principle
in the warmth of flaming faggots
lie partial answers
to questions you've yet
to even ask

the people will not move
a step further
without life
as a hopeful prospect

Enlightenments In Toad Hall Or The Buddha As A Hot Number

Tom Kennedy

my feet are softened by some familiar way
crossed before
is it

some silent Buddha cruising me?

I am the theater of life
one mask: the marxist
one mask: the socialist feminist
one mask: the gay militant
one mask: the sensitive poet trying
one mask: the image of young lust
one mask: this form needing your love

some familiar way . . .
and the Buddha's dressed in flannel and denim tonight
beckoning me to the Dharma
inviting me over some beer to Realize

again i realize and know
that there's a difference
between the mask and its wearer
but as quickly again i can forget

he maintains his reluctance
to speak of class struggle
since his teacher was murdered
by chinese communists
in some remote and distant
mountain village
Perhaps reluctance
is the Tibetan way
Perhaps there are things
i must resolve on my own

There is an old gay zen saying:
At first the meat rack is just the meat rack
but later
as one grows
the meat rack is no longer the meat rack
but
in the end
the meat rack is just the meat rack

What do we do after freedom?

Southern Methodist University

rama

School of Humanities and Sciences
Department of Economics
Dallas, Texas 75275
April 1, 1976

Dear Mr. Hinton:

We are trying to locate Charles M. Hinton who attended SMU and received the Dallas Economist Club Award in 1967.

Please write immediately if you are this Mr. Hinton, and let us know something of your progress since graduating from SMU. The Dallas Economist Club would like to have this as part of the Club's records, and to be used at the coming luncheon for new awardees on April 23rd.

Thank you for your assistance and early attention.

Sincerely,
Jessie Smith
Department of Economics

April 14, 1976

Dear Jessie Smith,

I am quite a different person than I was ten years ago. Even at SMU I began to grow restless and feel confined by the academic routine. I turned down a fellowship at the University of Wisconsin to go to the Peace Corps in Bolivia. The Peace Corps trained me to work as a technical advisor to Savings and Loan Cooperatives, but I chose/ was sent to a remote area in the Amazon Basin where there weren't any coops that I could work with. So I got involved in a program that helped teach the people about the importance of nutrition. The people I worked with were Quechua Indians who had grown

rama weaves baskets, scarves, and strategies for revolution.

up in a stable culture at altitudes of eight to twelve thousand feet. The Bolivian government decided to open up the Amazon lowlands in Eastern Bolivia for settlement and these people went to farm the land. They live lives of desperate survival, because they are completely unprepared to cope with the new conditions in the jungle. They are given an axe and a machete to cut down and farm virgin jungle. They are torn completely from their cultural roots and thrust into artificially set up communities. They live on virtually an all starch diet, and many suffer from malnutrition. The infant mortality rate is over 50% and adults frequently die in their twenties or early thirties.

People drink themselves into a stupor out of boredom and desperation. With several other volunteers, I started a small program to introduce soybeans and dairy goats and teach people the importance of eating a balanced diet.

The program had limited, if any, effect, but the Peace Corps was a very valuable experience in that I learned a lot about the United States government and how it affects other countries. I saw American corporations building roads with 6% interest loans that would double the actual cost of the money loaned. Under terms of the loan, Bolivia had to use an American company and buy American machinery even though it was much cheaper to use Japanese or Brazilian equipment. I saw American workers, who generally treated Bolivians like dirt, getting a daily food allowance of five times that spent on Bolivian workers. And I saw rich Bolivian generals tripping over each other to get choice roadside land, similar to real estate agents around BART lines in San Francisco. I began to understand what the effect of the Peace Corps was in that it often introduced American cultural values to remote areas that had never known them before. Most of the time I was in Bolivia I was fighting the draft to keep from going to Viet Nam. The whole time I was asking myself which is the true face of America—the Peace Corps or Viet Nam. Now I know they are actually two expressions of the same reality.

Toward the end of my stay in Bolivia I discovered why I was restless in school and what I was running away from so hard that I had to hide myself in a village of five people at the end of a one lane jungle road—homosexuality. Coming out has not been easy. The first few months in the States were hell. I had been out of the country for almost four of the most intense years in American history. However I was resolved to face my gayness and take whatever came, so I slowly started to build a life that is now very beautiful and satisfying.

The first two years back I worked a mimeograph machine for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, whose main work was to provide men of draft age with solid factual information about the draft. It also gave advice to those who were conscientious objectors. At CCCO I deepened my understanding of the nature of American economic and cultural imperialism and made deep connections between what was happening in Viet Nam and my Peace Corps experience.

During that time also I had my first gay love affair. It lasted almost two years. I was very happy during that time, but was restless in a lot of ways. I wanted more involvement in things. One of the things I studied was the women's movement, and I began to understand a lot of women's analysis about the economic role of women's housework, rape, monogamy, the need of childcare, and the imperialism of straight white men. It helped me understand my own oppression as a gay man in a repressed heterosexual society.

In 1973 I started doing laboratory cleanup half time in the University of California Medical Center, a job I still hold. Since I work in the evening I have lots of time available for what I consider my primary work: political organizing.

Last year I started to work with a new organization called Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL). We are currently organizing what we hope will be a massive demonstration on May 8 against the recent outrageous decision

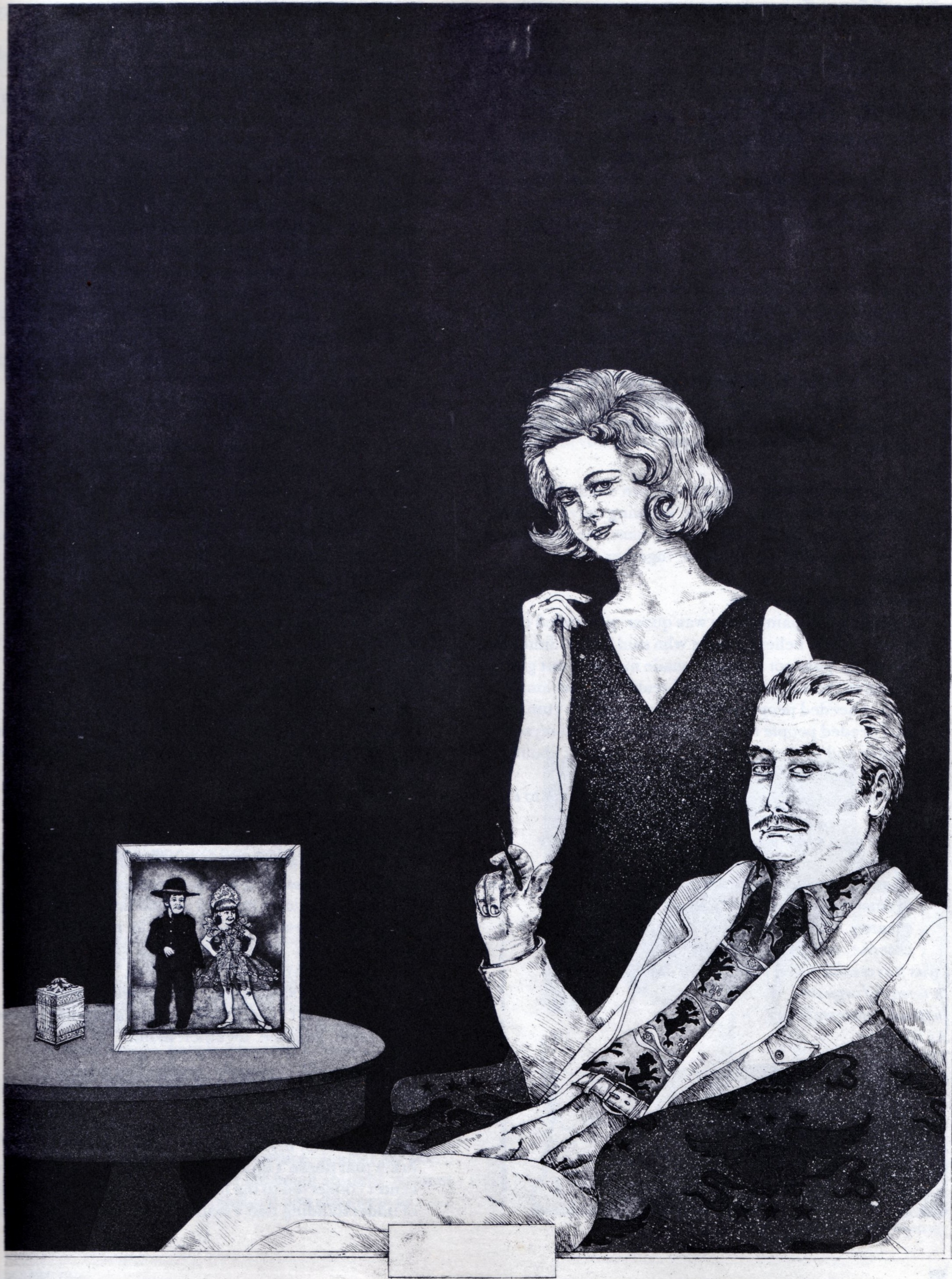
of the Supreme Court upholding the sodomy laws in Virginia. The Court had the audacity to quote Leviticus in a decision that threatens the civil rights of perhaps 10% of the population in a country that is supposed to have separation of church and state. The decision is closely related to other recent decisions that threaten the civil rights of labor, farmworkers, and undocumented workers.

Besides BAGL I also work with *Magnus*, a journal that will appear soon, and the Gay Culture Collective, a group that sponsors biweekly events that work to get gay people in touch with both our individual creativity and our cultural traditions which go back way before Leviticus. I live collectively with three other men in an old San Francisco Victorian flat. I have a very rich and full life, although probably not what the Economist Club had in mind when it gave me that award ten years ago. I am enclosing a poem I wrote that says more than I can possibly say in this letter about my feelings.

It was a surprise to get your letter. If you or any of your friends are ever in San Francisco, feel free to look me up. I would be interested in what is happening at SMU.

Sincerely yours,
Charles Hinton (rama)

Mary Beth and I take pride in the fact that we have always let Mitzi and Martin jr. be their own person.
etching by Tom Till



Are You Lonesome Tonight?

i mean "Are YOU Lonesome Tonight?"

rama

Pain!

Pain!

toothache . . . headache . . . HEARTbreak.

Pain!

hurts. rejection hurts. me. when i was a kid and i wasn't "good" enough. or "smart" enough. or "strong" enough. or "rich" enough. or "straight" enough.

Pain!

loneliness. knowing i will die my own death. knowing i must make my own decisions. knowing only i can feel my own pain. birth. death. alone. pain. the boundaries of existence that we all share. together. alone.

Loneliness

Is a factor in gay oppression.

i couldn't feel pain when i was queer. pretended it wasn't there. believed those who said *THEY* didn't feel anything. pain got stronger. made me come out gay. i began to think about it . . . and realized it was loneliness. i needed people to talk to and touch. to cum out to. i needed people to cum out to me. i forced myself on people and got rejected. i felt pain. i thought about it . . . and realized it was possessiveness.

Much of my possessiveness was due to my need not to be lonely

Combined with hard to give up notions about private property.

i was lonely. didn't know what to do. where to go. who to trust. i clung to everything i could touch. for security. to own it. possess its nature. control its essence. make it my property.

I was possessive when i thought of other people

In terms of orgasms

Instead of interrelating

As spirits

That never cease

Coming

And

Coming

And

Coming

Out.

big cock. big muscles. white skin. hairy chest. swanky flat. lots of money. didn't satisfy me. i felt that pain deeper in my gut. kept looking for the source. learned about racial discrimination. women's liberation. old people, handicapped people. children. cultural imperialism. male religions that worship male gods. christianity. militarism. spanish inquisition. dyke witches and magical homosexual men in revolt. against male religions that worship male gods. called heretics. called faggots because they were used as kindling to roast dyke witches tied to a stake to an agonizing death. capitalism. the power of the ruling class. the oppression of workers. economic imperialism. viet nam. wounded knee. angola. gallo wine boycott. san quentin six. attica. nazi germany. ku klux klan. ronald reagan. fascism. all connects to my loneliness. in my mind. in my gut. i came out a twentieth century faggot. i am on fire!

It helps me to understand how my sexual needs

Are related to, but distinct from

The whole web of my complex emotional needs.

when i feel horny i stop and think. sometimes i really want sex so i go and find it. other times i see i really need a friend to talk to and cuddle up to and feel close to and maybe then have sex. i look for friends like that. i like sex. i like to like sex. to enjoy sex. get pleasure. be aware that a sexual experience is giving me pleasure. i like to give pleasure. to know *HOW* to give pleasure. out of love. not desperation. or is that two ways to saying the same thing?

I can best meet my emotional needs in class conscious

And collective living and working situations.

class conscious: there are more poor people in this world than rich people. for a reason. someday all us poor people gonna find out why we been poor and we ain't gonna be poor no more.

collective: the rich say "go get it yourself." the poor say "we'll get it together." and organize to get it. together.

collective: a new way of saying "family."

Where I am free to explore my own creativity.

How i communicate my own unique understanding of pain to other people. everything i do. making bread. washing dishes. weaving. touching. kissing. sucking. licking. penetrating and withdrawing. penetrating. withdrawing. penetrating. withdrawing. your ass. your brain. your consciousness. your awareness of me. of yourself. with me. together. alone.

Creativity.

the care i take to extend myself the most i can. to feel. to touch. to taste. to experience . . . LIFE. every minute. every day. in every relationship i have. with people. plants. myself. alone. trapped in a body. in a brain that doesn't understand why it is here. but with a center connected to the life force that says "that kind of understanding don't matter." the pain of aloneness

is what separates us. the life force is what holds us together. creativity is how we communicate the tension between the two.

*Where the only restraints are my sense of group needs
And the feedback I get from other collective members.
Where there are no bosses.
Where we are all teachers
And all students.*

where we share equal power. and know when we don't.
and why. and accept it. or else we organize. to get it.
*Through collective living and working we learn
To share
To trust each other
To trust ourselves
To live more inexpensively
And to give each other the emotional support we need
To develop communist alternatives
To capitalist ways of living and doing business.
that's what i'm talking about. communism.
By working together collectively the means become the
end.
The personal becomes the political.
The goal becomes the path.
The path becomes the goal.*

karl marx meets buddha and has a spiritual awakening.
maharishi mahesh yoga develops class consciousness
and teaches people to meditate for free. scientific
rationalism proves that the way of the cagey tao really
does exist and drops acid to find it. dialectical material-
ism and astrology have a chance meeting in a gay bar
and realize they are old friends. malcolm spreads a
tarot. emma goldman comes out. together we build a
community.

one that taps into ancient knowledge long forgotten.
plugs into the collective unconscious that is the accum-
ulation of all human experience. passed down through
blood. through drum beats. through pain. *FEEL* that
pain. *FEEL* that life. *FEEL* that pulse beating inside
YOU. that is the life force fascists try to kill.

*Ideology and sexual morality will make themselves
apparent*

In the process of living

Revolting lives.

in revolt against the government of the united states of
north america. against capitalism. against revisionist
imperialist communism. against the dictatorship of
straight white men who possess only one kind of
power. *KILL!!!* faggot magicians. dyke witches. people
who aren't white. people who aren't christian. people
who aren't rich. people who aren't *MEN*. who would
stamp out life itself. but they can't do it. because it can't
be done.

I am a faggot in revolt!

against my own fears and cowardice. against my self
hatred. against my guilt for not being straight. against
their inability to understand and unwillingness to

listen. their repressed sexuality. their laxatives and flu
shots. their nuclear power plants. their nuclear
families. their prisons. their mental institutions. their
schools. their computer programming. their banks.
their mansions. their country clubs. "their" country.
"their" land. "their" property. all of it *stolen*. their
values so twisted it makes me puke.

I am a faggot in revolt!

against everything and everybody that has discounted
me and humiliated me and tried to suppress my anger.
my *RAGE*. my smell. my prick. my asshole. my shit.
my essence.

I am a faggot in revolt!

learning what i'm not supposed to know. to defend my-
self. to protect my health. to think. to listen. to criti-
cize. to listen harder. to organize. revolt.

I am a faggot in revolt!

taking power over my life. learning to share that
power. very spaced. in.

I am a faggot in revolt!

now do you understand? because i do.



photo by Philip Rossetti

Practice Makes Powerful

"If you want knowledge you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear you must change the pear by eating it." (Mao Tse-tung)

Effectively organized demonstrations can challenge the power of our oppressors, and focus public attention on gay anger. Furthermore, whenever we do political work we gain experience worth sharing, whether it be making a zap or building an organization. This is the first of what we intend to be a continuing series of examples of practice.

PRESS RELEASE

A militant demonstration by over 100 gay men and women on April 6, 1976, disrupted and brought to an abrupt halt a panel discussion on the "Psychodynamics of Male Homosexuality." The panel was sponsored by the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine and was held at the New York Academy of Medicine in New York City. Featured speakers were Doctors Irving Bieber, Charles Socarides, and Lionel Ovesey, three of the most notorious proponents of the theory that homosexual behavior is pathological.

As gay people picketed and chanted outside the building, several members of the Gay Socialist Action Project were quietly sitting inside the lecture hall. Although the panel was closed to the public, G.S.A.P. members gained entrance to the building when one of the group found a service entrance and a back staircase leading to the lecture hall. After five minutes of Doctor Ovesey's opening speech, one member of Gay Socialist Action Project blew a whistle, and

another member loudly announced that "the actual topic of tonight's discussion will be 'The Social Dynamics of Anti-homosexuality Among Male Psychiatrists and Psychologists.'" Other members of G.S.A.P. then began reading a statement to the startled audience. Within minutes panel moderator Herbert Hendin announced that the meeting was adjourned. The demonstrators had succeeded in preventing the psychoanalysts from holding their meeting. They forcefully let the medical profession know that gay people will no longer allow them to present their pernicious and pseudoscientific theories without militant challenge.

The demonstration was the result of cooperative action by several gay organizations in New York City. Gay People at Columbia, the Gay Academic Union and the Gay Activists Alliance publicized the panel and called for a massive turnout of gay people to protest the appearance of the anti-gay doctors. GAA organized militant picketing outside the building, and dozens of gay people filled the lobby and sat down in front of the elevators to protest the last minute closing of the panel to the public. Chants of "closed panels, closed minds," filled the hall as well-dressed analysts stepped over the sprawling bodies of the angry gays. Over twenty New York City policemen were on hand, but no one was arrested.

Dr. Arnold Cooper, president of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine tried to calm the crowd in the lobby by deploring the recent Supreme Court decision which upheld the sodomy statutes, and denying that psychoanalysts were in any way responsible for it. He claimed that the association was a scientific organization, not a political one, but was interrupted by shouts of "you are political, you are responsible," and "your theories and propaganda support the political oppression of gay people." But the analysts refused to accept their complicity in the oppression of gays. An analyst

leaving the building muttered, "It's your problem if you think that just because we call homosexuality pathological, that means you are inferior."

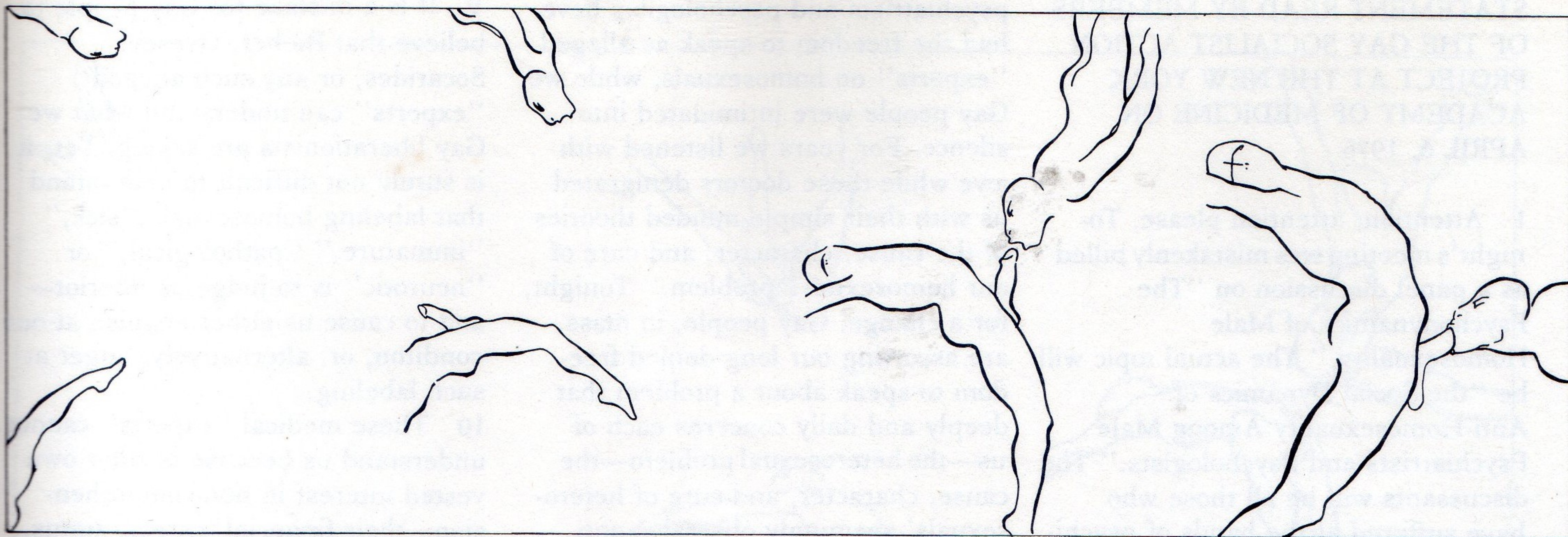
Following is the flyer distributed by the Gay Socialist Action Project at the demonstration and a copy of the statement which G.S.A.P. read at the meeting.

WE HOLD THESE MEN RESPONSIBLE

We protest the appearance of Irving Bieber, Lionel Ovesey, and Charles Socarides here this evening to speak on "The Psychodynamics of Male Homosexuality." Their books, articles, and public statements are witness to a prejudiced ignorance concerning every aspect of gay life. We protest the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine's reaffirmation of their undeserved authority by placing them on tonight's panel.

Doctors Bieber, Ovesey, and Socarides are professional apologists for a heterosexual male-dominated society which heartlessly continues to oppress homosexuals and women. They have taken it upon themselves to elaborate "theories" and "therapeutic techniques" designed to reinforce some of that society's most negative values. They must therefore be held personally responsible for the damage inflicted on countless human lives. Their flood of misinformation intimidated and victimized homosexual and heterosexual people alike. Their irresponsible, sexist research spins diagnostic categories out of real oppression ranging from murder, queer-rolling and government-backed discrimination to socially induced erosion of self-esteem. They justify by circular reasoning and the exclusion of objective facts the repressive social norms they set out to support. They sacrifice homosexual people's integrity in order to keep all members of society in line.

Sexual and economic oppression have become indissolubly linked in primarily male ownership of property and in ideals of heterosexual male



drawing by Ed Aulerich

dominance, competition, and authority in the family. Male capitalists control access to work and the means of personal subsistence. An alternative social organization where men and women live and work together as equals, share the products of their labor, and develop their potential for love and friendship freely and individually is incompatible with the parasitism that psychiatrists such as these want us to take for granted as the norm of everyday existence.

Homosexuality exists in every human society. It receives its negative status in our own as part of an overall system of social values. Bieber, Ovesey, Socarides, Herbert Hendin, and others have accepted the task of devising a sophisticated rationale to deny that homosexuality can be a viable and dignified way of life. No longer just a sin or a crime, homosexuality is labeled pathological, a term whose specific purpose here is to enforce behavioral conformity.

For these men, the "sick" homosexual is produced by the "sick" family (mothers are singled out for special blame); physical love and closeness between same-gender partners are reinterpreted with self-revealing projection as covert warfare and thefts of masculine power; people who shrink from the violence of cut throat competition suffer from "success phobias." Dr. Ovesey, for

instance, can tell a "normal" man, who links his fallen self-esteem to fears of gayness, not to worry. Homosexuality is a mark of failure, says Ovesey, but "pseudohomosexuals" just need to re-enlist and keep putting their genitals where they belong in order to turn out alright in the long run. No wonder, then, that problems in climbing the ladder of success rate top priority in such a view of homosexuality. Only middle-class and upper-class "neurotics" spend time and money on years of shrinking. Working-class faggots are drugged or jailed instead.

These vicious interpretations cannot be represented as the frontiers of scientific thought. Homosexuality has been seriously studied in our own society, cross-culturally, and as an aspect of animal behavior in general. Most importantly of all, gay people themselves are speaking out loudly and clearly about the reality of their own lives and experience. The results of this research and dialogue undermine the foundations of sexist repression. Homosexuality is as "natural" as anything else we call by that name and homophobia (the fear and hatred of homosexuals) turns out to be the disease.

Tonight's panelists have arrogantly ignored or downgraded these facts. They carry with them the weight of the tightly-controlled medical profes-

sion, whose unrelenting stand against decent health care for Americans of every economic class is an eloquent statement of their political position. They seek to force us back into the closets or onto their worn-out couches as an alternative to reappearance in the criminal courts. Condescending scorn for the "incurables" among us seeps out undisguised from every page of their writings and gives lie to their unmerited claims of objectivity.

Charlatans such as Bieber, Ovesey, and Socarides are offering us the opportunity to confess our guilt and try to "adjust" to the system of capitalist exploitation which gives them hire. Some years ago Nazi Germany gave up on such ineffective "adaptive therapy" in favor of another method of restoring national sexual health—sending homosexuals to concentration camps and gas chambers. Doctors Bieber, Ovesey, and Socarides speak for the most inhumane, unenlightened elements of their profession. They have already profited enough from their well-backed exploitation of gay people. We are determined to prevent them from doing so any longer.

STATEMENT READ BY MEMBERS
OF THE GAY SOCIALIST ACTION
PROJECT AT THE NEW YORK
ACADEMY OF MEDICINE ON
APRIL 6, 1976

1 Attention, attention please. Tonight's meeting was mistakenly billed as a panel discussion on "The Psychodynamics of Male Homosexuality." The actual topic will be "the Social Dynamics of Anti-Homosexuality Among Male Psychiatrists and Psychologists." The discussants will be all those who have suffered at the hands of psychiatric-psychological professionals. Open discussion from the audience will be preceded by a few prepared comments.

2 Did German Jews have a moral obligation to debate Nazi theorists' ideas of Jewish inferiority? Did southern slaves have the obligation to meet with apologists for slavery and argue whether Blacks were really inferior? Do Gay men and women in 1976 have the moral duty to discuss with the psychological ideologues of homosexual inferiority whether homosexuals are "diseased," "pathological," "immature," or only "neurotic?"

3 The victims' alleged "responsibility" to answer bigotry with counter-argument is a requirement imposed by the oppressor to defuse the victims' legitimate outrage and rebellion. The oppressed have no obligation to present their oppressors with a critical analysis of their oppression. Only traditional academics could conceive that the rebellion of the oppressed need be justified by any debate.

4 Bieber, Ovesey, and Socarides are among the major theorists of homosexual oppression. Each of these doctors is personally responsible for untold years of guilt and inferiority feelings suffered by Gay women and men. These doctors stand indicted as generals in the war of heterosexual dictatorship against Gay people; a genocidal war of annihilation.

5 For more than a hundred years,

psychiatrists and psychologists have had the freedom to speak as alleged "experts" on homosexuals, while we Gay people were intimidated into silence. For years we listened with awe while these doctors denigrated us with their simple-minded theories of the cause, character, and cure of our homosexual "problem." Tonight, for a change, Gay people, in mass, are asserting our long-denied freedom to speak about a problem that deeply and daily concerns each of us—the heterosexual problem—the cause, character, and cure of heterosexuals' seemingly obsessive anti-homosexuality.

6 For Gay people to debate with members of the psychological establishment only legitimates the doctors' authority. The destruction of this very authority is an essential part of the Gay liberation struggle.

7 For any oppressed group to debate with its persecutor implies that this group conflict is based on a misunderstanding, correctable by education. At the root of such conflict, however, are fundamentally opposed group interests. Debate cannot settle such conflict. The resolution of such conflict is a matter of which group has the power to impose its judgment on the other—a matter of power. The conflict between Gay people, psychiatrists, and psychologists will only be resolved in favor of Gay people when Gay people possess the power to fully determine our own lives.

8 For nineteen years, between 1950 and 1969, American homosexual emancipationists thought they would better their group's condition if only Gay people were polite, respectable, dressed nicely, and showed how just like heterosexuals they were. This tactic was not only demeaning to homosexuals; it simply did not work. Only when Gay people adopted disruptionist tactics did we stop the degrading business of begging heterosexuals to end our persecution. Through our own defense activities we began to feel a new sense of our own dignity and worth.

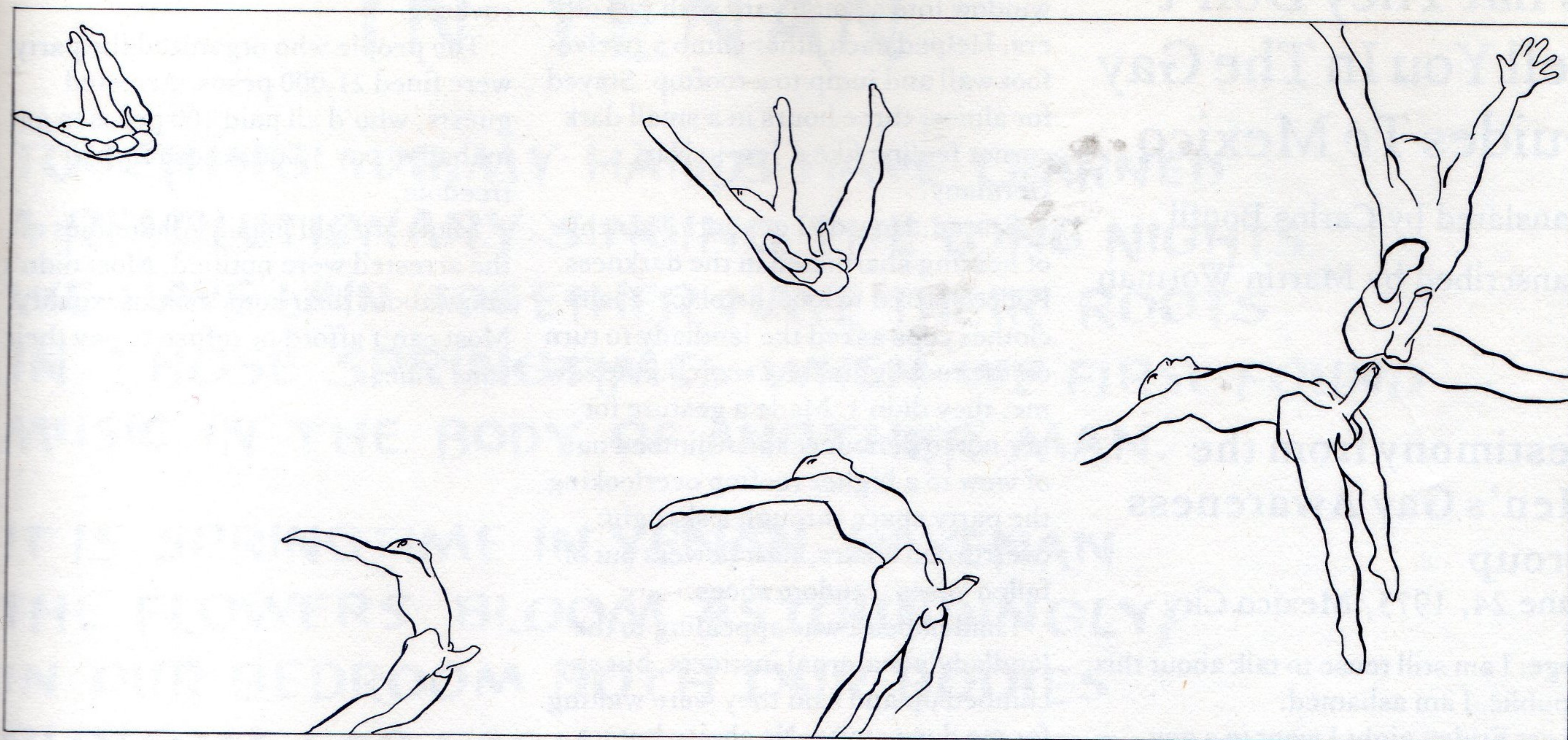
9 It is a mistake for Gay people to believe that Bieber, Ovesey, Socarides, or any such alleged "experts" can understand what we Gay liberationists are saying. Yet, it is surely not difficult to understand that labeling homosexuals "sick," "immature," "pathological," or "neurotic" is to judge us inferior—and to cause us either anguish at our condition, or, alternatively, anger at such labeling.

10 These medical "experts" cannot understand us because of their own vested interest in non-comprehension—their financial, career, status, and ego investment in maintaining their class position as such "experts." If Gay people were not "diseased" or "disturbed", as these doctors claim, these medical men would quite literally be out of business.

11 These doctors are petty entrepreneurs with an interest in keeping us in our place, businessmen whose stock in trade has been their alleged expertise on us. For years these doctors have prospered and profited from our pain. It is time that Gay people put the profiteers of pain out of business, and announced their bankruptcy to the world.

12 For years, psychiatric-psychological professionals, under the protective cover of "objectivity" and "science," began with a basic negative judgment about homosexuals. Such doctors have gone on to invent imbecilic theories about homosexuality, and subjected Gay people to a horrifying and barbarous variety of "treatments:" aversion therapy (chemical, electric and verbal); castration; clitoridectomy; chemical shock; electro-shock; group therapy; hormone treatment; hypnosis; hysterectomy; lobotomy; LSD treatment; ovary removal; psychoanalysis; psychodrama; radiation treatment; tranquilization; transsexual surgery; vasectomy.

13 Gay people, by their united action, must force psychiatric-psychological professionals to stop, once and for all, their persecution of



drawing by Ed Aulerich

homosexuals under the obscene cover of aid. Gay people must tell each other and the world about the psychological profession's role in the social creation of that very psychic pain they are ostensibly interested in eliminating.

14 Under the guise of science, the mind doctors, like the smug philistines they are, have complacently propagated the absolute virtues of heterosexuality, marriage, monogamy, parenthood, and the most traditional, narrow concepts of "masculinity" and "femininity." They have upheld the value of the present sexual division of labor and power, of competition, and of individual success within the capitalist marketplace. Their opposition to the Gay liberation movement unmasks them as the upholders of a lethal status quo.

15 Gay people must not meet the doctors on these doctors' own terms. It is time that Gay people defined the terms—it is time that we radically reconceptualized ourselves.

16 Historically, homosexuality has been conceived by ecclesiastics as a sin; by politicians as a crime; by psychiatrists as a mental illness or disturbance. It is time that Gay people made a clean break with these

theological, legal, and medical ideas. It is time to reject the idea that homosexuality, any more than heterosexuality, can be reduced to the purely psychological.

17 It is time that Gay people denied the legitimacy of all so-called "experts," "authorities," or "professionals" who claim to know more about us, and what is good for us, than we do. We must deny the psychological reductionism of those well-named "shrinks" who would make us less than fully human. We are a people—one of this society's oppressed and resistant groups, who will no longer let others speak for us—we have found our own voice.

18 Tonight we propose a new series of questions for discussion by Gay people concerning anti-homosexuality.

1 What are all the subtle varieties of anti-homosexuality experienced by Gay people at the hands of psychiatrists, psychologists, and others?

2 Exactly how did a group called psychiatrists and psychologists come to have the power to define homosexuals?

3 What can Gay people do to

de-legitimize the psychological "authorities" who have sought for so long to de-legitimize us?

4 What are the social causes, characteristics, and cures of heterosexuals' long-standing fear, hatred, and active persecution of homosexuals?

19 For too long we have been diagnosed, prognosed, counseled, helped, treated, and cured.

20 For too long we have been Bieberized, Berglerized, Capponized, Freudianized, Caprioed, Hatterered, and Hendined.

21 We have been psychoanalyzed, tranquilized, hypnotized, psychodramaed, group therapied, hormone treated, shock treated, aversion treated, lobotomized, hysterectomized, clitoridectomized, castrated.

22 Some of us have died.

23 Despite the mad and evil scientists some of us survived.

All: Some of us decided to revolt.

* * * * *

The average heterosexual adult male uses the word "fag" approximately 23.7 times a month.

What They Don't Tell You In The Gay Guides To Mexico

Translated by Carlos Bonfil

Transcribed by Martin Worman

Testimony from the Men's Gay Awareness Group

June 24, 1975, Mexico City

Jorge: I am still tense to talk about this in public. I am ashamed.

Last Friday night I went to a gay party where they charged 100 pesos (U.S. \$8.00) to get in. In a public place, a rented hall, the Mutual Association of Israel—not a Jewish place—but one used frequently by spiritualists, for seances.

Lots of Liza Minnelli-lip-sync drag there. Three men inspecting the bar. Alcohol or health inspectors. I went to the people who organized the party and told them I was afraid there might be trouble. They told me I shouldn't leave, that any problem could be solved with money.

What if I need to escape, I thought. I told Xavier I feel like I'm in Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*—locked-in with assurances that it's all right. I looked and found a potential escape place, just in case. A small open bathroom window big enough for one person at a time. The feeling was so strong. I hung close to the bathroom.

There was no incident, but within minutes police were there with sub-machine-guns and walkie-talkies. Probably plainclothesmen had been at the party all evening. I suspect the party was "sold" from the beginning. Arranged for the purpose of the raid, or someone who knew of the party sold knowledge of it to the police.

When the police came I took two

steps, was in the bathroom and out the window into a small yard with two others. Helped each other climb a twelve-foot wall and jump to a rooftop. Stayed for almost three hours in a small dark corner feeling like a Jew in Nazi Germany.

Scared. How do I get out? My sense of hearing sharpened in the darkness. Police started to loot the place. Plainclothes cops asked the landlady to turn on the roof lights for a search. She saw me, they didn't. Made a gesture for her not to denounce me. Climbed out of view to a higher rooftop overlooking the party space through a skylight: overturned chairs, torn flowers out of fallen vases, random shoes.

I had hoped I was appealing to the landlady's maternal instincts, but she climbed up and said they were waiting for me downstairs. No choice but to face it. Down ladder through her three-room apartment. Four plainclothesmen with their pistols out.

They threatened to beat me if I wouldn't say why I was hiding. I told them I was scared and asked if they wanted money.

"We're not thieves," they said.

"I'm no criminal," I said. "I'm a married man with two children."

They called me "butch" and said they'd beat me until I admitted I was a faggot. They sat me in a chair. Gave me a cigarette. Interrogation tactics. Wanted to know if anyone else was upstairs. I told them no, and that I was there by mistake. They were so child-like, they began to believe it. I insisted. They were young, goodlooking, "hip" cops. Agents.

They finally took me out of there. Drove me around in their car till six a.m., took my watch, and let me out on a street corner near the Reforma.

They took nearly three hundred people away that night in army trucks because there wasn't enough room in police vehicles. I'd heard screams during my escape and while I was in the yard. Not just drag queen screams, but yells of people being hit. There were some women at the party, but it was hard to tell how many because of the drags. I saw some people running into

closets to hide, but they were all discovered.

The people who organized the party were fined 21,000 pesos. Arrested guests, who'd all paid 100 pesos to get in, had to pay 3,000 pesos for their freedom.

Many are still in jail. All families of the arrested were notified. Most didn't know about their sons' homosexuality. Most can't afford or refuse to pay their sons' fines.

* * *

"The great truth of our time is that our continent is giving way to barbarism because private ownership of the means of production is being maintained by violence. Merely to recognize this truth is not sufficient, but should it not be recognized, no other truth of importance can be discovered We must say that torture is used in order to preserve property relations. To be sure, when we say this we lose a great many friends who are against torture only because they think property relations can be upheld without torture, which is untrue.

"We must tell the truth about the barbarous conditions in our country in order that the thing should be done which will put an end to them—the thing, namely, which will change property relations.

"Furthermore, we must tell this truth to those who suffer most from existing property relations and who have the greatest interest in their being changed—the workers and those whom we can induce to be their allies because they too have really no control of the means of production even if they do share in the profits." (Bertolt Brecht)

IN YENAN

TOUCHING YOU, MY HANDS HAVE LEARNED
A REVOLUTIONARY SINGING. THE LONG NIGHTS
WE HAVE LAIN TOGETHER HAVE THEIR ROOTS
IN THOSE SPRINGTIMES WHEN WE FIRST FOUND
MUSIC IN THE BODY OF ANOTHER MAN.

IT IS SPRINGTIME IN YENAN. IN YENAN
THE FLOWERS BLOOM ASTOUNDINGLY;
IN OUR BEDROOM BOTH OUR BODIES
BLOSSOM FOR EACH OTHER'S HANDS.
IN YENAN THE LEAVES ARE BRILLIANT

IN THEIR GREENNESS. IN YENAN
THE WORKERS PLOW THEIR FIELDS WITH GREAT
TENDERNESS. HERE YOUR TENDERNESS IS GROWING
LARGER, IMMENSE WITHIN MY HANDS;
OUR TONGUES HAVE DONE THEIR PLANTING.

IN YENAN THE GROUND RESOUNDS
THE REVOLUTION. IN OUR BEDS THE SHEETS
ARE WELCOMING OUR ARMIES TO ANOTHER SPRING.
IN YENAN THE LAND STILL WHISPERS OF THE LOVE
IT'S SEEN; IN OUR ROOMS THE PILLOWS TELL THEIR TALE.

IN YENAN, IN OUR BREATHING, EVERY SOUND
STILL SPEAKS OF FREEDOMS, SINGS OF STRUGGLES
WE WILL WIN. IN YENAN THE AIR REMEMBERS; HERE AND NOW
MY FINGERS TELL YOU HOW I WOULD HAVE HELD YOU
IN THAT SPRINGTIME, ON THAT LONG MARCH TO YENAN.

PHIL ALLEN

calligraphy by Lawrence Goldyn



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Review:

Magnus the First

Bix Blague

Just as we were about to start the revolution without it, here comes *Magnus*, the magazine that attacks your life style no matter who you are, what you believe and practice, whom you believe and practice it with, or whom you're hiding from the authorities.

Magnus is uniquely designed. Each of its forty-eight pages is bound in a plain brown wrapper; the publication itself is mailed to subscribers dressed in gauze, which can be hoarded against the bloodshed of the violent revolution or against the bloodshed of a fascist *coup*—whichever comes first.

According to reliable sources the magazine was named for its sole contributor, Tom Kennedy, whose middle name is Magnus. Kennedy's work appears under several pseudonyms, among them J. Edgar Hoover, J. Edgar Beaver, Francis Scott Key, Tom Kennedy, and Martha and the Vandellas. He is about to merge with the CIA-AFL-CIO-CLC.

Concerned as they are with the ecological balance and whole-systems technology, the *Magnus* collective has devised a way to treat their publication chemically so that it is guaranteed to provide the reader with a free VD check-up as a reward for hanging in there with every article and poem until completion. Similarly, anyone who fails to finish reading more than two long articles or six poems in any given issue of *Magnus* automatically becomes a carrier of enough plagues to constitute an epidemiologist's nightmare.

The founders of *Magnus* are particularly anxious, they insist, to circumvent (or at the very least transcend) their classist, racist, sexist, vorticist, amethyst, empiricist, exorcist, polemicist, and cyst limitations. They at-

tempt to do so in several ways, among them self-flagellation, the gluttonous use of italics, shifty stances, the liberal distribution of spaghetti sauce stains over key theoretical passages throughout the magazine; and frequently uncut pages.

But their most transparent inspiration is their boxtop offer, which enables the crafty among us to exchange one San Francisco political line for two from New York.

The boxtop offer is an admittedly ingenious outgrowth of a now-obscure Menshevik-Trotskyist position paper entitled "Dry Cereal: The Real Culprit of History" (Velikovisochoye, 1972), which has appeared in its original language and form in every issue of *After Dark* since 1973. The position paper, banned in Battle Creek, Michigan when pressure was brought to bear by the Kellogg Company, is a committed attempt to divert the unsuspecting from the *real* culprit of history, false consciousness, also known as glitter.

Be that as it may, the Mensh-Trot paper asserts as its central thesis that Chairman Mao organized the now-legendary Long March in order to deliver two dry cereal boxtops to an unidentified stranger in exchange for a Captain Marvel signal ring that glowed in the dark. The paper's anonymous author, I.Y. Ipopyakov, claims that to this day the middle finger on Mao's right hand is green from that hard-won ornament.

Magnus is top-heavy with China. The new publication offers—as its inevitably most controversial inclusion—a titillating centerfold of Chairman Mao (a real flash, that, and reportedly the first time he has ever been seen in yellow). The centerfold shows him lying spread-eagled in front of a new hydro-electric plant outside Chengtu. Although the photo amounts, perhaps, to the only arresting lapse of taste in this premier issue, it also proves once and for all that Mao was not circumcised. (Ultra-revisionists have alleged repeatedly that the charismatic leader submitted to surgery when he briefly considered converting to Zionism after

meeting Golda Meir on a Mediterranean cruise ship in the early 1960s.)

The Mao centerfold is already available as a poster at many movement bookstores. Anticipation is mounting for the next *Magnus* exclusive, which, it is rumored, will be a gatefold of Fidel standing erect at a military artillery parade in Havana.

More orthodox aspects of this "journal of collective faggotry" are its sections on cookery, Third World interiors, nude gardening, and pole-vaulting. Its public-spirited features include "Disease of the Month" and "Mr. Torn Workpants." In addition there is a "Rhetoric Switchboard," a unique service that puts activists of widely-divergent political vocabularies within shouting distance of each other, and arranges ritual combats on buses, trains, in natural foods stores and restaurants, and child care centers.

Each copy of *Magnus* has bound into it a tiny record-player and a record which plays "Happy Days Are Here Again" and "Home on the Range" sung by up-to-the-minute revolutionaries everywhere in the world. Some of those revolutionaries were recorded at great risk of life and limb by the six members of the *Magnus* collective who pursued their heroes to their often dangerous hideouts. The technical quality of the end result is inconsistent. Moreover, some voices sound suspiciously like those of the members of the collective.

There is every reason to assume that *Magnus* will become a viable force in the radical political community, financed as it is by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Blood Bank of America, and the Pastry Fanciers of Ohio. It is not for your ordinary political heavy. Instead it is for those among us (if indeed they *are* among us) who are struggling around just about everything. What *Magnus* lacks in street smarts it compensates for in its innocence and solidarity. Or perhaps density is a more apt word. The film version of this first issue will appear in 1978, with Pope Paul as *Magnus*. There is even talk of a TV series, tentatively called *Thtruggle!*

Bix Blague is a regular contributor to *International Cheerleader*.

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